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A thirteenth century Sienese manuscript illumination

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A THIRTEENTH CENTURY SIENESE MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION

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ABSTRACT

A THIRTEENTH CENTURY SIENESE

MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION

by Elaine French

A 13th century Sienese miniature was examined to determine the circumstances of its creation and meaning of its subject matter. Cut from a choirbook, the painting decorates the letter S with a depiction of the Madonna and Child and a procession of individuals. After research on Sienese art of the 13th century, it was concluded that the miniature was painted by Primo Maestro dei Corali del Duomo, an attribution previously unknown. The art historical context in which he worked as well as other works attributed to him are described. Research on Sienese political, social and religious history plus consideration of unusual elements in the illumination led to a conclusion that it probably depicts notable citizens, perhaps affiliated with the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, in a procession to venerate the Virgin, patron saint of Siena.

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CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In a private collection in San Francisco resides a small manuscript illumination (Figure 1-1). Painted in the late 13th century in Siena, the painting of the historiated initial S decorates a leaf of music from a gradual. The leaf has suffered the fate of so many manuscript illuminations: it was cut at some point in the past from the book for which it was made. It appeared to yield few clues to its origins.

The miniature has several unusual features. It depicts the Madonna and Child, a common subject of manuscript illuminations and indeed of many forms of art in this era, in the upper lobe of the S, but the Madonna's posture is not typical. Moreover, an unusual group of individuals apparently in procession, carrying a banner, occupies the lower lobe. The goal of this thesis was to determine how and why the painting came to look the way it did and to what uses its manuscript might have been put.

The private collector had bought the illumination (hereinafter called the Burke miniature) from Christie's auction house, and the obvious starting point for research was the entry in the Christie's catalog, which was presumably based on research and scholarship.[1] The entry attributed the work to one of the illuminators of the Siena Duomo choirbooks at the end of the 13th century, possibly Dietisalvi di Speme, who might have been commissioned by a confraternity dedicated to the Virgin, perhaps the Confraternita della Misericordia. The thesis inquiry used this information as a starting point.

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[1] See Appendix A for a complete transcription of the Christie's catalog entry.

While the research reported here began with an initial interest in exploring the content of the miniature, that is the identity of the group and the nature of the depicted gestures and activity, eventually and inevitably pursuit of this issue led to a typical litany of art historical questions: Who had produced the work and for whom? Could a date and place of production be specified, along with the commissioning and purpose of the piece? It ultimately became apparent that this small painting was a window onto a larger realm. As a result, this thesis aims to show how this work reflects much of the artistic, social, cultural, political and religious context of its era, an era of historic transition in Siena in particular and Tuscany in general, from religious to secular government, from iconic to narrative artistic purpose, and from a symbolic to a realistic style of artistic depiction. In the course of the investigation, it became apparent that an attribution of the work to Dietisalvi di Speme, as hypothesized by Christie's, was most probably wrong.

The thesis begins with a description of the painting and the manuscript from which it was detached as well as remarks on the process of illumination. The art historical context is then described, analysis of the art of 13th century Siena being essential to understanding the work and determining its creator. After a discussion concerning the probable artist, the thesis turns to an examination of the content of the painting, beginning with a historical overview and culminating in a hypothesis as to the meaning of the work and who might have commissioned it.

CHAPTER 2

THE ILLUMINATION

The Burke miniature, like most of its era, is painted on vellum, a fine kind of parchment. Specialized artisans in the late Middle Ages used the skin of calves, lambs or kids to make the vellum: "Fresh skins were scraped, cured, and then stretched to dry.... [and] rubbed with pumice or chalk to make it less oily and to decrease its natural absorbency. It was then coated with thin layers of liquid size." The painting vehicle was probably "glair," a runny liquid obtained from egg whites, into which pigment was mixed. Illuminators might also use egg yolk, sugar and even earwax. "The need for a free-flowing vehicle that could be easily controlled was paramount for the small scale of most illuminations painted with tiny brushes."[2]

The Burke painting adorns a leaf taken from a gradual, one of several types of musical books with a liturgical function. The text is written in a gothic script, which serves to place the manuscript earlier than the introduction of humanistic script which was developed in Florence at the beginning of the 15th century.[3] A gradual contains the musical parts of the missal, the text of services for the Christian mass (or Eucharist), the service at which communion was celebrated, symbolizing the Last Supper and the

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[2] Bruce Cole, *The Renaissance Artist at Work: From Pisano to Titian* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), 103-4.

[3] Jonathon J. G. Alexander and A.C. De la Mare, *The Italian Manuscripts in the Library of Major J.R. Abbey (London: Faber and Faber, 1969),* xxii.

partaking of Christ's body and blood. "In its original sense the Gradual comprised the musical response sung between the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel, and the word derives from the steps ('gradus') where the Epistle was read. It came, however, to mean all the sung parts of the Mass."[4] Large parts of the mass were musical.

The Eucharistic mass in the late medieval church was distinct from the daily offices (Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline), which were performed in the choir. (The mass was celebrated at the altar.[5]) The service book for the daily offices was the breviary and the accompanying music book the antiphoner. Presumably greater attention was paid to the production and decoration of missals and graduals than that of breviaries and antiphoners. In addition, missals had to be large in scale to be propped on a lectern allowing the text and music to be read at a greater distance by the celebrants. The Burke manuscript sheet is indeed relatively large (428 by 296 mm) and probably served the usual function of allowing a choir to sing from a single choirbook. (Because of the size of music books, they continued to be hand-produced centuries after the introduction of the printing press.[6]) The musical notes, or neumes, of the Burke manuscript are arrayed on four line staves. The earliest manuscript choirbooks had no staves, while some had five. Because all medieval churches were expected to

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[4] Christopher De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (London: Phaidon Press, 1994), 222.

[5] Ibid., 202.

[6] Ibid., 223.

have a gradual (and also an antiphoner), these are among the most commonly found illuminated manuscripts today.[7]

Although the canon of the mass never varied, texts pertaining to individual days of celebration in the church year would be inserted. The S illuminated here is the beginning of the text "*Spiritus domini replevit orbem terrarum*" from the mass said at the time of the Christian calendar known as Pentecost (sometimes called Whitsunday). Pentecost is the festival on the seventh Sunday after Easter, celebrating the symbolic descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.

The missal has prescribed parts, and the text of this leaf comes from the introit[8]. The contents of a gradual "were codified by Saint Gregory in the late sixth century, with the music falling at logical intervals to mark actions or movements in the service....The opening and most important hymn in the Mass was the introit. Its use first recorded in the *Liber pontificalis* (Book of the Popes) in the sixth century, the introit marked the entrance of the celebrant into the church. Its text is nearly always biblical and was often based on the opening verse of a psalm."[9]

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[7] Ibid., 222.

[8] Other parts include the calendar, the collect or prayer for the day, appropriate readings from the epistles and Gospels, the Offertory, the unchanging text of the Mass itself, Common Preface, the Canon of the Mass, the Sanctoral, the Common, and votive masses for special needs. Ibid., 206-9.

[9] Laurence B. Kanter et al., *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence 1300-1450* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 18-19.

The illumination of graduals primarily took the form of historiated initials, such as this one (although decorative elements without specific connection to the text often appear). "Like the beginning of a new chapter in a book, the introit was most often singled out for special decoration."[10] We might assume, then, that this painting held special prominence in the gradual for which it was produced.

Depicted here is a vigorous pale blue letter S, massive, muscular and three-dimensional (Figure 2-1). A *grottescho* at the left holds the outer frame that encloses the S, while organic, abstract decorative elements stretch upward on the page to the left of the staves and neumes. A complex of abstract leaves and circular forms lies below the framed S. Blue and red hues, probably of expensive vermillion and lapis pigments, predominate throughout the work; these paints were usually reserved for works involving the Madonna. The importance and value of the illumination are also suggested by the burnished gold medallions that embellish the S. White filigree elements decorate the frame, while the figures are depicted against a geometrically designed trapunto background of pink, red, and orange, reminiscent perhaps of needlework or mosaic tiles. The absence of a gold background and the robustness of the figures mark the departure of this piece from the Byzantine style which predominated in earlier manuscripts.

The Burke manuscript was most likely produced in Siena in the 13th century (this attribution will be explored in later chapters), and at this time in Siena, book production had moved away from monastic scriptoria. In fact, no evidence exists that a scriptorium

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[10] Ibid.

was located in Siena's cathedral, the Duomo.[11] The Benedictine monastery at Montecassino had been the center of book production in Italy from the 6th through the 12th century, and smaller monasteries throughout Italy contained scriptoria. But lay professionals increasingly took over the production of both sacred and secular books toward the end of the 1100s and into the 1200s[12]. Book production was especially common in towns with universities.[13] Bologna assumed great importance in the 13th century as a center of manuscript production, especially legal texts and Bibles, probably because of its great university. The 13th century saw a vast increase in manuscript production. Siena University was founded in 1240 and comprised schools of law, grammar and medicine.[14] Undoubtedly such an extensive academic institution required the production of books in large numbers.

The new large quantity of books needing copying led to certain changes in production, increasing the potential for error. The decoration and the text of books were

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[11] Ada Labriola, "La miniatura senese degli anni 1270-1330," in *La miniatura senese 1270-1420*, ed. Cristina de Benedictis, 11-103 (Milano: Soprintendenza al Patrimonio Storico Artistico e Demoetnoantropologico delle Province di Siena e Grosseto, 2002), 31. Labriola cites Enzo Carli as the source of this statement. For the sake of brevity, this work will be cited as Labriola in the text, although some citations of Labriola will refer to personal conversations and emails.

[12] Paolo D'Ancona and Erhard Aeschlimann, *The Art of Illumination: An Anthology of Manuscripts from the Sixth to the Sixteenth Century* (London: Phaidon Press, 1969), 26.

[13] Jonathon J.G. Alexander, *Italian Renaissance Illuminations* (New York: George Braziller, 1977), 10.

[14] Universita di Siena. *Short Academic History*. June 5, 2003. <http://www.unisi.it/english/storiaint_en01-02.htm>

increasingly produced by different hands. Illumination was often turned over to artisans who often could not read and might paint the wrong initial next to the text. Moreover, production in large quantity might have led to insufficient supervision. The plans for the text did not always cohere with the plans for the painting. While supervisors might prescribe certain images and pages would be sketched out accordingly (Figure 2-2), scribes sometimes accidentally omitted words or lines. The preplanned paintings thus would not match the text.[15] The Burke manuscript bears the traces of erasure of neumes and text on the recto, suggesting perhaps hasty or inattentive production or oversight. The fact that the illumination does not bear a relationship to the events of the Pentecost (the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles) might suggest that another text was originally planned to accompany this S. It is likely that this painting, depicting a procession probably honoring the Virgin, may have had more to do with the celebration of the Feast of the Assumption on August 15th, which was the major feast day for the Virgin and thus the most important day of the Sienese year.

Because illuminators were no longer necessarily scribes by the 12th century, manuscript illumination became increasingly professionalized. Lay miniaturists were initially called to monasteries and given room and board and paid in cash, an indication of the emergence of the monetary economy in this era. Scribes often moved from one

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[15] Ada Labriola in an email related that at the end of the 13th century Primo Maestro dei Corali del Duomo had delineated initials for the Lezionario Ms. G.I.2, in the Biblioteca Comunale of Siena, but had not painted them, and they were later executed by another anonymous artist about 1330-40. They had been left empty for unknown reasons. Email dated May 23, 2004.

center of book production to another, while individual artists with local roots began to be recognizable. "Within the various regions the style of decoration seems to be more easily recognizable than the script and therefore to be a more reliable guide to localization of manuscripts...."[16] Miniaturists became more interested in enriching the pictorial aspect of manuscripts, and the 13th century saw the beginning of historiated initials and decorated borders. [17] Eventually illuminators grew in numbers to such an extent that they formed guilds and confraternities (often dedicated to St. Luke, the purported painter of the Hodegetria Madonna).[18] Norman reports on a document recording the presence of a workshop of female illuminators in the convent of Santa Marta in Siena.[19] The line between miniaturists and painters of more monumental work became obscured through the course of the 13th century, and recent scholarship is beginning to recognize the same hands in both media.[20]

As mentioned above, the Burke painting is a sheet cut from a large manuscript, a choirbook with many pages and other illustrations. Such manuscripts were cut apart, often by the owners of the books themselves, and collecting these works grew in earnest

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[16] Alexander and De la Mare, xxii.

[17] Jonathon J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 101-118.

[18] Ibid., 12-30.

[19] Diana Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena (1260-1555)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 29.

[20] Labriola notes Rinaldo painted miniatures, and Bellosi reports that Guido da Graziano did too.

in the 19th century, when "collectors often gathered miniatures into albums like valueless curiosities such as hair, butterflies, and insects. Sometimes miniatures were cut out of old books to form new books...[and] calligraphers also assembled manuscript leaves into albums as samples of script."[21] In the Victorian era, medieval illuminations were usually regarded as little more than "entertaining trinkets."[22]

At the end of the 19th century, however, following the influential sale of the Spitzer collection in Paris[23], illuminated manuscripts assumed greater interest and value in their own right and intact manuscripts were no longer dismembered. Purchases by wealthy Americans around the turn of the century resulted in the famous collections now visible in the Morgan Library, Philadelphia's Free Library, and the Lehman Collection in New York. "The Italian publisher and bookseller Ulrico Hoepli formed his collection during this period (bequeathed in 1935 to Vittorio Cini; then in 1962 to the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice)."[24] The Burke manuscript may have roots in one of the early 20th century sales to wealthy Americans. The illumination was consigned to Christie's by the estate of Elizabeth Hirsch. However, manuscript illuminations now in the collections of the Philadelphia Free Library and the Venice Cini Foundation are possibly related to the Burke painting and will be discussed later.

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[21] Sandra Hindman, *Medieval and Renaissance Miniature Painting* (Akron, Ohio: Bruce Ferrini Rare Books, 1988), xiii-xiv.

[22] Ibid., xiii.

[23] Ibid., ix.

[24] Ibid., xv.

CHAPTER 3

ART IN SIENA IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

To determine if 13th century Siena was indeed the setting for the Burke illumination, as Christie's asserted, we must examine the artistic context in that time and place. Until relatively recently, the 13th century in Siena had not attracted as much art historical interest as that period in Florence, other than the late years of the century when Duccio emerged. The lack of scholarly attention is somewhat puzzling, given that a prodigious talent like Duccio's would probably not have arisen in a vacuum. Although recent research has now yielded important information, identification of individual artistic profiles remains problematic, the subject of debate among scholars. This chapter is an overview of what is known and what is hypothesized about the art of the era.[25]

The art of Siena in the 13th century embodied a rich mixture of artistic currents and styles. Byzantine and Greek strains merged with Gothic influences entering Italy from the north. Artists within and beyond Tuscany left their marks on work produced in Siena or by Sienese artists. [i]These currents, combined with historical, social and cultural factors unique to Siena itself (which will be discussed in another chapter), ultimately led

[25] A major exhibition in 2004 Siena of the art of Duccio and his antecedents, contemporaries and descendents spurred widespread new interest in this art. The exhibit catalog is Alessandro Bagnoli et al., eds., *Duccio: Alle origini della pittura senese* (Milano: Silvana Editoriale Spa, 2003).

to what is considered the full flowering of Sienese art in the 14th century in the work of Duccio, the Lorenzettis and Simone Martini.

Developments in Sienese art were one part of a widespread renewal in Tuscan art that began about 1250 and was a generalized reaction to a dispersal of Byzantine artistic influences that had entered Italy earlier.[26] Byzantine artists had begun arriving in Italy as early as the 8th and 9th centuries, fleeing the iconoclasm in Constantinople and the east. After 1204, when Constantinople fell in the Crusades, many Byzantine and Greek artists came to Italy, and Pisa, because of its port, became home to many of these artists. In addition, some Italian crusaders became artists in the Levant, producing Christian iconic images,[27] and upon their return may have transmitted the Byzantine characteristics of their crusader art. A Greek artistic tradition, moreover, remained in Italy from Roman times and contributed to a neo-Hellenistic impulse. "Greek artists and their Italian pupils were called to Rome and Florence during the thirteenth century, and in time the *maniera greca,* or 'Greek manner,' was gradually transformed into what is loosely referred to as an Italo-Byzantine style."[28] While the Byzantine influence may have been largely indirect, it is also possible that Byzantine artists worked in Siena. The St. John

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[26] Henk Van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces 1215-1460 (*Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1988), 17.

[27] Jaroslav Folda, "Icon to Altarpiece in the Frankish East: Images of the Virgin and Child Enthroned," in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento,* ed. Victor Schmidt, 12-146 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 123.

[28] Snyder, James, *Medieval Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, 4th-14th century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), 449.

Antependium (now in Siena's Pinacoteca) is thought to have been produced in Siena by a Byzantine artist.[29]

While iconic art dated to the early Christian era and centuries-old iconic images still existed in mosaics and frescoes in Roman churches, Byzantine artists had elevated the icon to the highest levels. In the 13th century pilgrims and crusaders brought back icons in the form of painted panels from the east, and Byzantine artists in Italy further promulgated the form. In early 13th century Italy, the icon of the Madonna and Child had crystallized into a static, repetitive formula that governed virtually all Marian depictions. One particular form of Madonna and Child icon with Mary indicating the Christ child with her hand was called the Hodegetria, meaning she who shows the way. Named after a painting in the Church of the Hodegoi in Constantinople, this original was thought to have been painted by St. Luke.[30] The type has been traced to at least the 5th century.[31] This formularized Madonna typically had soft, delicate flesh, narrow tapering eyes, a long arching nose, small pinched mouth, heavy shading of cheek and eye sockets, and colorful drapery.

The early 13th century saw the production in Siena and its surrounding area of a number of Madonnas of this standard Byzantine iconic type. Among these is the Madonna in the San Bernardino Oratory (Figure 3-1), painted for the *chiesa parrocchiale*

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[29] Van Os, 17.

[30] Snyder, 155.

[31] Alfredo Tradigo, *Icone e Santi d'Oriente* (Milano: Mondadori electa, 2004), 169.

of Tressa, south of Siena, by the so-called Master of Tressa. Better known is the similar *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi* of 1215 (Figure 3-2), painted for the Siena Duomo and now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. The pose of the figures in both is virtually identical: the fully frontal Virgin presents Christ to the viewer in the Hodegetria mode. Christ is dressed in a toga, raising his right hand with two fingers extended in the Latin blessing and holding a scroll in his left hand. The *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi* wears a halo that is constructed partially in three dimensions; it projects beyond the frame of the painting[32]. The *Majestas Domini* panel (Figure 3-3), now in the Siena Pinacoteca, is stylistically similar to these works and most probably dates from the same period. It is hypothesized that all three were originally antependia, covering the front of an altar, and were "moved to the top of the altar table in the course of the thirteenth century."[33]

As the 13th century progressed, Sienese artists moved toward a new synthesis beyond, but incorporating, the Byzantine tradition. "At this period Siena was evolving a variant of Byzantine art which had a distinct character of its own."[34] Although the iconic type of Madonna and Child "passed into Sienese painting of the late 13th century,"[35] it was modulated, westernized, and made less abstract. The modification of the type may

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[32] Interestingly, a Madonna and Child in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Florence attributed to Coppo da Marcovaldo and alternatively to Meliore also wears a halo of this projecting type.

[33] Van Os, 12.

[34] Van Os, 17.

[35] Snyder, 155.

have been in part attributable to the influence of Gothic art: where the Byzantine focus was on the iconic single figure, the Gothic tended toward the narrative, the "encyclopedic and discursive."[36] This trend resulted in a greater naturalism, which was to be reinforced further by the classical figurative tradition that was reemerging at this time. The Gothic influence was to be seen most strongly in the art of Duccio, the Lorenzettis, and Simone Martini at the beginning of the 14th century.

Pisa not only provided a general avenue through which the Byzantine influence entered and spread through Italy, but also was the home of influential individual artists, Giunta Pisano and Giovanni and Nicola Pisano, whose artistic impact was felt throughout Tuscany. Giunta is credited with influencing Sienese painting in an expressive direction and, in the opinion of Boskovits, is manifest particularly "in the works of Guido da Siena's followers who worked in the second half of the 13th century."[37] Siena, however, evolved in its own distinct direction: "The dramatic message conveyed by the Pisan master is subdued by a lyric approach, which often turns the subject of the picture into a colourful narrative...reminiscent of the miniature painting of the period...."[38]

One of the most significant new features of the enlarged Siena Duomo dedicated in 1267 was a pulpit sculpted by Nicola Pisano and his son, Giovanni. This monumental work, influenced by the Pisanos' viewing of Roman sarcophagi in the Camposanto in

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[36] Snyder, 453.

[37] Miklos Boskovits, *Early Italian Panel Paintings* (Boston: Branden Press, 1966), 10.

[38] Ibid.

Pisa, showcased a new style with widespread effect on artists in Siena and further afield. (Their later sculptures on the facade were equivalently innovative and influential.) The robust fullness of the classicized figures and their energetic poses stretched the limits of the relief medium and must have given pause to painters whose work to that point had been of the flatter Byzantine style. The figures' elegant drapery and expressive features, however, synthesized Giunta's older Byzantine style with a newer Gothic approach. The contribution made by Nicola and Giovanni to the emergence of the distinctive Sienese style can hardly be overstated.

In Florence during this period, a different response to the Byzantine developed. Coppo da Marcovaldo, perhaps more influenced by the Greek figurative tradition, created what Carli identified as a "plastic illusionism around the abstract graphic formulations of the Byzantine style"[39] that became typical of mid-13th century Florentine painting. His style was made familiar to Sienese artists firsthand after he was purportedly captured at the Battle of Montaperti and brought to Siena where he produced the *Madonna del Bordone* for the Church of Santa Maria dei Servi in 1261 (Figure 3-4). The "vigorous plastic abstract monumentalism"[40] of the Bordone Madonna provided a model for Sienese artists.[41]

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[39] Enzo Carli, *Italian Primitives: Panel Painting of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.: 1965), 31.

[40] Ibid., 24.

[41] Van Os questions this widely held assumption; see page 25.

Another Tuscan who impacted the Sienese was Cimabue, an important artist whose fame was such that Dante mentioned him in his *Purgatorio* and Vasari heaped praise on him in the 16th century. The pupil of a Greek teacher, Cimabue was among the large number of painters who worked at San Francesco in Assisi from approximately 1288 to 1292, producing a series of frescoes of enormous importance to others working in Assisi as well as to the many painters who traveled from around Italy to view the magnificent decorative scheme in the church.[42] Coppo and Cimabue both showed a "facility for making the figures appear in the reality of space, and [a] way of transforming the shapes of the human body in order to express emotion...." [43] Cimabue, however, adopted a more natural figurative approach, softer than Coppo's hard edge modeling. Moving beyond Coppo, he bid "solemn farewell to medieval Byzantinism."[44] He is perhaps most noted for his ability to express emotional content without sacrificing naturalism of form. Cimabue's influence on the Sienese has been seen in Guido da Siena's *Dossal No. 7* (Figure 3-5) in the Siena Pinacoteca: according to Bellosi, "the more vibrant and picturesque effect of the chiaroscuro...may also be a response to the

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[42] "Peu après 1277, lorsqu'à Assise commencèrent è se dresser les échafaudages pour la décoration à fresque de la basilique supériere de San Francesco et que fut appelé à en prendre la direction le florentin Cimabue, certains artistes Siennois non seulement allèrent s'y instruire mais essayèrent et obtinrent d'y être employés comme collaborateurs, auprès de Cimabue lui-même et de ses disciples immédiats." Ferdinando Bologna as quoted in Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, ed., *L'art gothique siennois* (Florence: Centro Di, 1983), 32.

[43] Boskovits, 11.

[44] Carli, 37.

pictorialism of Cimabue...."[45] Further, Bellosi defines a "Cimabuesque context that formed in Siena and from which the young Duccio emerged as the major, though not only, personality."[46]

In an attempt to convey the rich mix of artistic currents that contributed to Sienese art in the 13th century, this discussion may have seemed to suggest that the course of influence was one-way, flowing only into Siena. But the myriad patterns of artistic interchange and influence defy any such simplistic depiction. Sienese artists traveled widely, and the impact of Sienese style on others is not in doubt.[47]

Who were the later 13th century Sienese artists whose art was impacted by the influences discussed above and within whose orbit the painter of the Burke manuscript might have traveled? For years, much of the art of Siena in this period had been

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[45] Luciano Bellosi, "Per un contesto cimabuesco senese: a) Guido da Siena e il probabile Dietisalvi di Speme," *Prospettiva* 61, (January 1991a): 6.

[46] Luciano Bellosi, "Per un contesto cimabuesco senese: b) Rinaldo da Siena e Guido di Graziano," *Prospettiva* 62, (April 1991b): 15.

[47] Duccio's *Rucellai Madonna*, for example, was commissioned by a Florentine confraternity and was completed in 1285. Because of its apparent lasting impact on Florentine artists, it was attributed by Vasari and others for many years to Cimabue. In addition, the *Madonna and Child Enthroned* in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore (c. 1255) in Florence is attributed to Coppo, but includes a relief feature that was found in the much earlier *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi* and the *Majestas Domini* panel, both dating to 1215. The distinctive projection of the stuccoed haloes of the major figures would suggest a path of influence if not imitation. Sienese artists undoubtedly had as much influence upon others as others upon them. The second half of the thirteenth century was a period of rich creativity, of artists hungry for new ideas, and of myriad avenues for interchange. The 14th century saw the Lorenzettis working in Arezzo, Florence and Assisi, while Simone Martini worked in Naples, Pisa, Orvieto, Assisi, and Avignon.

attributed by art historians to Guido da Siena. James Stubblebine's influential 1964 monograph on Guido classified 13th century Sienese paintings according to their relationship to Guido and his followers.[48] Relatively recent research by scholars such as Bagnoli, Bellosi, Maginnis and Schmidt[49] has begun to break apart this monolith, however, and the artistic identities of other individuals have emerged, although the scholars have not always agreed on these identities.

"To Guido is always accorded the role of protagonist in the panorama of Sienese painting before the advent of Duccio."[50] The assignment of this role to Guido is attributable to the fact that his signature is found on the *San Domenico Madonna* (sometimes called the *Palazzo Pubblico Madonna*) along with the date 1221 (Figure 3-6). As such it is one of the only Duecento paintings bearing an artist's signature. Although the work was redated to the 1270s after 1221 was recognized as signifying the date of San Domenico's death rather than the date of the painting, the earlier dating may have given Guido a long-lasting but not fully deserved prominence. That is, if the *San Domenico Madonna* had been completed in 1221, it would have represented a huge leap of stylistic accomplishment when compared to the *Madonna degli Ochi Grossi* painted a

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[48] James Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena (*Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1964.

[49] Bagnoli, et al.; Bellosi, "Guido da Siena" and "Rinaldo da Siena;" Hayden B.J. Maginnis, "Everything in a Name? Or the Classification of Sienese Duecento Painting," in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. Victor M. Schmidt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Hayden B.J. Maginnis, *The World of the Early Sienese Painter (*University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.)

[50] "A Guido si e sempre accordato il ruolo del protagonista nel panorama della pittura senese prima dell'avvento di Duccio." Bellosi, "Guido da Siena," 6.

mere ten years earlier. It would appear to be a revolutionary break with the Byzantine iconic model. However, when placed in the 1260s or 1270s, as contemporary art historians have determined, the work appears less groundbreaking and Guido's oeuvre less seminal.

Another reason that so many works remained attributed to Guido for so long is the relative similarity of paintings of this period. The relatively limited modes of pictorial expression of the Middle Ages combined with the formularized Byzantine Madonna iconic tradition (what greater possible authority for artistic expression than St. Luke?) made for stylistic strictures with strong and deep roots and thus little possibility of individuation. Maginnis, as discussed below, also hypothesizes that artists in this era worked collaboratively in workshops.[51] Differentiation among Sienese artists of the Duecento thus turns often on minute distinctions of connoisseurship.

After a close examination of works ascribed to Guido, noted Sienese art historian Luciano Bellosi has presented detailed arguments for several different artistic hands.[52] He derived a "configuring of a personality of a painter diverse from Guido...also operating in the area of the same cultural coordinates. An alter ego who occasionally works beside him--but separately—in the completion of a same body of work."[53] Bellosi

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[51] Maginnis, *Early Sienese Painter,* 90.

[52] Bellosi, "Guido da Siena" and "Rinaldo da Siena."

[53] "Viene a configurarsi la personalità di un pittore diverso da Guido, anche se operante nell'ambito delle stesse coordinate culturali. Un alter-ego che occasionalmente lavora accanto a lui—ma separatamente—alla realizzazione di uno stesso complesso." Bellosi , "Guido da Siena," 10.

believes this painter to be Dietisalvi di Speme, deriving this identification from *biccherne* tablet illuminations[54] documented to Dietisalvi. He goes on to ascribe to Dietisalvi the *Madonna Galli-Dunn*, the *Madonna of San Bernardino*, and, of particular importance, the *Madonna del Voto* (Figure 3-7), now in the Duomo of Siena. Van Os and others believe the *Madonna del Voto* was originally commissioned for the high altar of the Duomo following its remodel in 1267, replacing the *Madonna degli Ochi Grossi.* Bellosi hypothesizes that Dietisalvi and Guido worked together on the so-called Badia Ardenga panels (currently scattered) and that they were painted on the rear of an altar dossal for the Duomo featuring the *Madonna del Voto*, prefiguring the construction of Duccio's Duomo altarpiece, the *Maesta*, and its accompanying dossal panels.[55] Bellosi also

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[54] "The biccherne are small painted panels, created as covers for official documents of the civic government of Siena, Italy between the 13th and 17th centuries....The biccherne derive their name from the government agency that originally commissioned them: in 1257 the Office of the Biccherna, the most important financial branch of Sienese government, charged with managing all the revenues and expenses of the city, inaugurated the custom of commissioning panel paintings from the best artists in the community of function as the covers of its semi-annual collection of public ledgers. Shortly thereafter, the Office of the General Gabella, which was responsible for all duties and other taxes on commoditisers and business transactions, followed suit." Jan Rothschild and Susan Kenney, *Art and Economics: Sienese Paintings from the Dawn of the Modern Financial Age: July 31-October 14, 2002.* (Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2002.) June 7, 2002, <www.corcoran.org/exhibitions/biccherne/press.htm>, 1-2.

[55] Barbara John, however, suggests on the basis of a conversation with Monika Butzek of the Kunsthistorisches Institut that the *Madonna del Voto* was always located on a side altar and thus would not have had a dossal. Barbara John, "Guido da Siena's Misteri di Gesu Cristo," in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. Victor Schmidt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 286.

attributes frescoes in the crypt of the Duomo (Figure 3-8) to Dietisalvi.[56] Such attributions, if correct, elevate Dietisalvi to a position of greater importance than Guido in the history of the art of Siena in the second half of the 13th century.

Other artistic identities that have been elaborated in this era are those of Rinaldo da Siena and Guido di Graziano. Bellosi has attributed the *Madonna and Christ Enthroned* in the church of the Clarisse and a few other works to Rinaldo.[57] Guido da Graziano's oeuvre, Bellosi suggests, includes the *San Pietro Dossal* (c. 1285) in the Pinacoteca and a number of manuscript illuminations. The possible identification of both artists, as with Dietisalvi, owes to their documentation as painters of *biccherne* illuminations. Guido assumes the greater importance, in Bellosi's view, because his work is emblematic of Siena's response to the "seduction of that great painter," Cimabue, but also may reflect "a response to his grand Sienese colleague [Duccio]" who was already working at the same time and whose work had filtered Cimabuesque aspects.[58]

Maginnis questions Bellosi's arguments for the identities of these artists. He does not concur with the stylistic similarities Bellosi sees and questions his basing the arguments on the tiny images painted on *biccherne* covers.[59] However, Maginnis goes on to hypothesize the identity of yet another Sienese painter, the San Bernardino Master,

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[56] Bellosi, "Guido da Siena." This discussion covers several pages of the article, notably pp. 13-16.

[57] Bellosi, "Rinaldo da Siena," 15.

[58] Ibid., 26.

[59] Maginnis, "Everything in a Name?"

responsible for the *San Bernardino Madonna and Child* of 1262 (Figure 3-9), which again like so many others was previously attributed to Guido da Siena and which Bellosi now attributes to Dietisalvi. He ascribes considerable weight to this artist: "If any painter in Siena provided precedent for Duccio's later meditations on plastic form, as in the *Rucellai Madonna*, it was he." [60] White, like Bellosi, believes that the Master of the *San Bernardino Madonna* is actually Dietisalvi and agrees with Bellosi that Dietisalvi may have been the master and Guido da Siena the pupil.[61]

Given the difficulties of attribution of these early Sienese works, Maginnis hypothesizes that

> we are dealing with the production of a joint workshop, an artistic consortium. While there certainly was a master whose original vision was taught to others (the San Bernardino Master seems the likely candidate), what survives to us is the production of essentially independent painters come together in partnership, a partnership wherein commissions were distributed among its members.[62]

This view is also held by Norman, who notes the frequent occurrence of families of painters as well as partnerships and collaborations. Both panel paintings and frescoes, she notes, show multiple hands.[63]

Other artistic personalities continue to emerge in this era and are the subjects of ongoing research. Vigoroso da Siena, for example, is known to have painted at this time,

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[60] Ibid., 476.

[61] John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 171.

[62] Maginnis, "Everything in a Name?," 483.

[63] Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena*, 29-31.

but the full extent of his oeuvre is difficult to pinpoint. He became a citizen of Siena in 1276, but is best known for a Cimabuesque polyptych he completed in Perugia a few years later. He is documented between 1290 and 1293 as receiving payments for "*la décoration des livres du camerlingue*,"[64] or *biccherne* covers.

One more artist of this era warrants mention here because he was suggested as the possible artist of the Burke manuscript.[65] Memmo di Filippuccio (active 1288-1324) is best known for painting several frescoes in San Gimignano and was also documented as working in the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi in the early 14th century. But, of significance to the identification of the Burke manuscript artist, Memmo has been also credited with several manuscript illuminations in Siena in the latter two decades of the 13th century, although these attributions are not firm.[66] He was "an original and prolific artist, who strove to create a personal synthesis between the more sinuous, Gothic style of his early pieces (closely associated with Duccio and Simone Martini) and the volumetric, spacious and rational images of Giotto's work at Assisi."[67]

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[64] Bologna in Dini, *L'art gothique*, 32.

[65] Robert Burke's personal written notes on his collection.

[66] Labriola states that Previtali in 1964 had originally assigned certain pages of the Corali of the Siena Duomo to Memmo, but she and Boskovits agree they are by a different hand. Labriola, 281.

[67] Cristina de Benedictis, *Memmo di Filippuccio*. Grove Dictionary of Art. San Jose: San Jose State University. May 11, 2002.
<http://libaccess.sjsu.edu:2292/data/articles/art/05/0567/056750.xml?section=art.056750#art.056750>

That art assumed new importance in Siena in the second half of the 13th century is without doubt. A new aesthetic impulse seems to have sprung up throughout Tuscany, manifest in ways small and large. The earliest preserved *biccherna* cover in Siena dates to 1258; civic authorities apparently now valued art such that they commissioned the decoration of these covers. Guido da Siena took sufficient pride in his production to sign his name on the *San Domenico Madonna* in the 1260s or 1270s. A law forbidding the arbitrary demolition of buildings in San Gimignano dates to 1282. Rules for the types of buildings permitted to be built overlooking the Sienese Campo were written in the late 13th century. Beginning in the 13th century also, we find the gateways to Siena painted with frescoes (often including a portrayal of the city's guardian, the Virgin).[68] These and other developments led to the magnificent artistic outpouring of the 14th and later centuries.

[68] Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena*, 15.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION AND ATTRIBUTION OF THE BURKE ILLUMINATION

Given the difficulties of identifying individual hands in the Sienese art of large scale--altarpieces, panel paintings, and frescoes--of this era, it is not surprising that identifying the sources of manuscript illuminations is even more difficult. Miniaturists worked in anonymous groupings in workshops, in collaborative fashion, in monasteries or in lay book production centers, and rarely if ever signed their work. Moreover, production of a single book often took place in multiple locations: scribes worked in different places from the illuminators, and different illuminators worked on the same book. In the late 15th century and 16th century, when manuscript illuminations became more elaborate, with paintings covering entire pages, identification of an artist's hand became more feasible. But in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, illumination was largely limited to the decoration of initials or to small elements inserted on manuscript pages. The small scale of these paintings makes the process of attribution difficult because distinctive elements are visually difficult to perceive. Documentation of authorship, payments or commissions is often lacking for manuscripts, unlike the *biccherna* tablets. A final difficulty lies in the fact that manuscript illumination appears in many ways to be more advanced than larger scale painting; it is livelier, more narrative, more experimental, as if the miniaturist felt freer to break the bonds of the

prevailing pictorial tradition. An artist whose hand was identified in a more monumental work of art might paint quite differently in miniatures.

To pursue the question of attribution, let us return to a description of the Burke manuscript painting (Figure 1-1 and 2-1). The illumination consists of a half-length Madonna and Child in the upper lobe of an initial S with five figures depicted in procession in the lower lobe of the S. Interestingly, this format recalls the earliest form of book illustration, in scrolls and later incorporated into early Christian Bibles, in which horizontally arrayed friezes or registers were used to convey a narrative. Snyder reports that in these early books, narrative and iconic modes often overlapped and fused,[69] as they appear to do here.

The Madonna and Child of the Burke miniature are in general iconic mode, but the image is not of the so-called Hodegetria type. The Madonna's right hand is pointing, not in Hodegetria fashion at the Christ child, but outwards toward the viewer's left; she is not presenting her son to the viewer. Her head inclines slightly toward the child, and his body is turned slightly toward hers. The rigid symmetry and frontal pose of the Hodegetria are not visible here. The figures below are dressed in colorful robes of blue, red, and pale blue, and the figure at the far left appears to be a woman. They are advancing upon a series of blue steps that proceed up and out of the image on the right. The placement of the steps ascending the curve of the S is artfully clever.

While dark outlining abounds in the work, the painting lacks many typically Byzantine elements. The haloes of the Madonna and Child, the gold seals or medallions

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[69] Snyder, 80-90.

on the initial S, and the faces, hair and hands of all figures are delineated by heavy black lines. The background, however, is not Byzantine gold, but a trapunto pattern of pinks and reds. Although the haloes are gold, the black outlining serves to give them, ironically, a more massive, less flat quality. The figures are all volumetric; lines do not take the place of modeling. The flesh of all figures is softly modeled with chromatically appropriate shading. Fatty folds are depicted on the naked chest of Christ, and his arm appears distinctly chubby. The volume of the drapery too is chromatically modeled and is not defined by radiating chrysography or use of multiple lines. And the Madonna and Child not only do not conform to the Hodegetria model, but they have broken out of the flat picture plane and appear to project outwards. The Madonna's halo (perhaps in a reference to the stuccoed halo projecting from the *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi)* and fingertips overlap the red frame, as does the figures' drapery. Christ appears naturalistically to rest in his mother's left arm. The figures in the procession below relate realistically to each other—they appear to have sufficient space as they follow one another. The stairway toward which they proceed is of a believable scale relative to the figures.

The painting does not reflect the Gothic influences that will be seen later, especially in 14th century Sienese art. The faces are not visibly expressive; there are a blandness and sameness to them. The stance and body type of the figures are simple and robust: they are not sinuous, lyric or graceful.

Where can we place this work stylistically? Is the Christie's attribution to 13th century Siena defensible?

The absence of both earlier Byzantine and later Gothic elements would certainly suggest placing it in the later decades of the 13th century. The volumetric and naturalistic quality of the figures and the simplicity of the composition and decorative elements would suggest its affinity with the Tuscan style. Placing it in the Sienese orbit was more difficult because of the complex mix of artistic currents in Tuscany during this period, as described in the preceding chapter. While comparison of this work with Sienese art of the 13th century was instructive, it was the similarity of this work to miniatures documented as Sienese that led to a clear determination of its origin in Siena.[70].

The illumination bears resemblance to the Sienese school traditionally identified as derived from Guido da Siena but now thought to encompass more, and perhaps more capable, artists than Guido. Guidesque elements can be identified here. The darkly outlined eyes, heavy eyebrows, long straight nose, a line connecting eyebrows and nose, elongated spiky fingers, and pinched lower lip are found also in the *St. Dominic* in the Fogg Museum (Figure 4-1). The positions of the figures in the Burke manuscript also echo those of the *San Domenico Madonna* (Figure 3-6). (While the faces of the *San Domenico Madonna* were repainted later in a Ducciesque mode, followers of Guido are said to have repainted the face of the Fogg *St. Domenic* and presumably maintained Guido's style.) The Burke artist, like Guido and his followers, appears to have broken from an older Byzantine approach but not yet embraced the later Gothic.

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[70] Catalogs of miniatures were reviewed, such as those by Labriola, *La miniatura senese*, and Dini, *L'art gothique siennois.*

The *San Domenico Madonna*, however, retains elements of the Byzantine that the Burke manuscript does not. In the *San Domenico Madonna*, we see a gold background, chrysography, and flat, somewhat insubstantial figures. Guido's work is marked by "an abstract conception of figuration...with the crude definition of the figure through the underlining of the contours and the chiaroscuro...."[71]. The Burke artist, on the other hand, appears to have more fully adopted a Florentine aesthetic as transmitted to Siena, reflecting knowledge of Cimabue's pictorialism or a more thorough internalization of Coppo's monumentalism as seen in the *Bordone Madonna* (Figure 3-4). The Byzantine elements of the *San Domenico Madonna* are missing, and the figures are fuller and more naturalistic.

Who was this miniaturist? Commonly, art historians of manuscript illumination have delineated different artistic personalities and named them after the most important manuscript in which their hand is visible. Christies' attribution of the Burke manuscript to the still obscure and ill-defined Dietisalvi di Speme may be based simply on the fact that he is now one of the relatively more well-known Sienese artists of larger works of the period. That Sienese artists of larger works also painted in miniature is fairly well-documented: Bellosi attributes manuscript illuminations to Guido da Graziano, and Labriola assigns several to Rinaldo da Siena.[72] Whether Dietisalvi produced manuscript illuminations is not yet definitively known, but his style, like that of the Burke artist,

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[71] Bellosi, "Guido da Siena," 7.

[72] Bellosi, "Rinaldo da Siena," 22, and Labriola, 260-261.

appears to break from the older Guidesque approach and incorporates new elements. The attribution to Dietisalvi thus appears plausible and warrants investigation.

As discussed in the previous chapter, no consensus has emerged on Dietisalvi's oeuvre. He is documented as having produced the *biccherna* cover of 1264, with the *camarlingo* Ildebrandino Pagliaresi (Figure 4-2), the cover of 1270 with Ranieri Pagliaresi, and the cover of 1282 with Don Ghiffolino, Monaco di San Donato. Based on the connoisseurship of Bellosi[73] and elaborated later by Maginnis[74] and others, his oeuvre may also include the frescoes in the crypt of the Duomo, *Il Beato Andreas Gallerani che accoglie i pellegrini* (Pinacoteca), the *Madonna Galli-Dunn* (Pinacoteca), the *Madonna del Voto* (Duomo), *Crucifixion* (Pinacoteca), *Bacio di Giuda* (Pinacoteca), *Croce Dipinta* (Museo delle Pie Disposizioni), the *San Bernardino Madonna* (Pinacoteca), *Madonna and Child* (Arezzo Museo), *Stimmate di San Francesco* (Pinacoteca), *Miracolo di Santa Chiara* (Pinacoteca), and *Martirio di San Bartolomeo* (Pinacoteca).

Dietisalvi's style as seen in these tentatively identified works reveals roots in the Guidesque tradition, but a new sensibility is visible. Like Guido, his figures are elongated, sometimes insubstantial or abstracted, with faces marked by characteristic dark lines, especially along the brows and nose. But Dietisalvi's figures show an expressiveness missing in Guido's works; the *Galli-Dunn Madonna*, for example, is

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[73] Bellosi, "Guido da Siena."

[74] Maginnis, "Everything in a Name?," 476.

"serious" and "melancholy" compared to the sweet *Madonna of Dossal No. 7* by Guido.[75] Dietisalvi manifests a "freer, more vibrant painterly language [*linguaggio pittorico più libero e vibrante*]"[76] that allows for the greater expressiveness and naturalism. His figures, in the crypt of the Duomo, for example, manifest a Gothic naturalism and lyrical grace (Figure 4-3).

While both Dietisalvi and the Burke artist share the fact that they diverge from the older Guidesque tradition, their styles differ and it is difficult to conclude that Dietisalvi painted the Burke manuscript. Dietisalvi's figures lack the volumetric appearance of those in the Burke manuscript; they are elongated and willowy. The expressiveness apparent in Dietisalvi is lacking in the Burke painting; compare the faces from the crypt (Figure 3-8) to those of the Madonna and Child in the Burke illumination. The elongated curvilinear eyes of the *camarlingi* in the undisputed works belonging to Dietisalvi (the *biccherna* covers) (Figure 4-2) differ from the geometric shapes of those of the Burke manuscript figures; when seen in profile the Burke eyes appear to be isosceles triangles resting on their sides. The Burke figures' eyes too have heavy straight brows, while those of the *camarlingi* are arching and thinner. These comparisons are especially telling because the *biccherne* tablets are closer in size to the manuscript illumination.

Close examination of 13th century Sienese manuscripts reinforced the conclusion that the Burke manuscript was not painted by Dietisalvi. Original manuscripts of this era were examined in the Biblioteca Comunale and the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in

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[75] Bellosi, "Guido da Siena."

[76] Labriola, 24.

Siena. In addition, the most comprehensive existing catalog of Sienese manuscripts from 1270 to 1420[77] was reviewed. A far more likely candidate as painter of the Burke manuscript emerged from this research: the so-called Primo Maestro dei Corali del Duomo di Siena. Stylistic similarities between the Burke manuscript illumination and the original miniature paintings and those attributed to the Primo Maestro reproduced in the catalog were clearly apparent. Finally, the author of the catalog, Ad[ii]a Labriola, concurred with and confirmed the identification.[78]

[77] Labriola.

[78] Personal conversation with Labriola, May 6, 2004.

CHAPTER 5

THE ARTIST: HIS WORK AND HIS LIFE

The distinct artistic personality that Labriola was the first to label[79] the Primo Maestro dei Corali del Duomo (the First Master of the Choirbooks of the Duomo) was actually identified in 1927 "when Toesca recognized his hand in the decoration of choirbook 33-C of the Duomo of Siena."[80] He was the most prolific master of the illuminators of the 13th century Duomo choirbooks and seems to have been commissioned to do important assignments.[81] His hand has been identified in miniatures through the end of the 13th century.[82]

Primo Maestro's Work

The Duomo choirbooks are not the earliest identified works by the Primo Maestro. Labriola identifies his oldest work, in the middle of the 1270s, as the decoration

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[79] Ada Labriola bestowed this name on him because his are the earliest datable illuminations of this set of the Duomo choirbooks. Labriola, *La miniatura senese.*

[80] Ibid., 21.

[81] A complete list of his works as identified by Labriola is in Appendix B.

[82] In the following discussion of the oeuvre of Primo Maestro, I am indebted to the work of Labriola and others for identifying the works by his hand. I was not able to personally view all works identified as his, not enough to enable me to judge the accuracy of all attributions or to fully describe the range of his style. Photographs in Labriola, *La miniatura senese*, are, for the most part, small and in black and white. His works are not widely published.

of a gradual in the Archives of the Duomo of Arezzo originally found in the local Pieve di Santa Maria.[83] In the Arezzo miniatures, Labriola sees the roots of Primo's style in the school of Guido da Siena.[84] Primo Maestro's style is marked in these early works by his Guidesque use of heavy facial lines, which enables a certain schematic expressiveness.

Labriola also notes the influence of Coppo da Marcovaldo's *Bordone Madonna* of 1261 in the chiaroscuro contrasts of these early works. Other Florentine aspects also appear somewhat visible: the broad, simple planes of drapery and the volumetric figures. Although it is possible that Primo Maestro completed the *Corale* D commission for the *pieve* in Arezzo outside of that city, his possible presence there is of interest because Cimabue is documented as working in Arezzo at approximately the same time. To Cimabue is credited the Crucifix in San Domenico in Arezzo, a work thought to have been completed before a trip to Rome where he was documented in 1272.[85] Florentine aspects in the work of Primo Maestro may stem, in part, from this possible exposure to Cimabue. Of note too is the background motif in the Cimabue Crucifix—not Byzantine gold, but a trapunto pattern not dissimilar to that used by the Primo Maestro in several illuminations.

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[83] Labriola, 21.

[84] I was not able to view these works in person and cannot sufficiently judge them from the small black and white photographs in the Labriola catalog; I rely here, therefore, on Labriola's textual information.

[85] Luciano Bellosi, *Cimabue* (New York: Abbeville Publishing Group, 1998), 273.

Also datable perhaps to 1275 is a *Cristo Benedicente tra due angeli e gli Apostoli* in a cut-out initial E currently in a private Austrian collection (Figure 5-1). The origin of this detached sheet is unknown, and it has not yet been related to other illuminations. The decorative elements are distinctly similar to other works by the Primo Maestro, with the salmon-colored trapunto background and white filigree on blue. The figures here are more Byzantine, however, than those of the Arezzo illuminations, with predominant linearity in the faces and drapery, and the space is compressed with the Apostles seemingly layered one upon the other.

Although Arezzo is in Tuscany, its location northeast of Siena may have brought Primo Maestro closer to the art of Bologna to the north and Umbrian cities to the south during his work there. Traces of Bolognese and Umbrian style are visible in his illuminations. In particular, the decorative element of filigree white lines on blue ground is traceable to Umbrian miniaturists. The Bolognese propensity for dark outlining is also visible in Primo Maestro, and this possible influence has been noted in many of his works.[86] We currently have no evidence that he worked in either place, but Labriola remarks on

> the fact of a significant affinity with examples of Umbrian illumination that are contemporary, or just a bit later....Beneath the contours of the ornamental aspects of his illuminations, the Sienese master follows a preference for harmonious classicism found in that region's [Umbria's] repertory...however, in a style that shows greater rigor of design.[87]

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[86] Anna Maria Giusti as quoted in Dini, 43.

[87] Labriola, 21.

After the Aretine works, the hand of Primo Maestro is next identified in a group of detached folios, currently scattered in different collections, probably done in the 1280s, perhaps 1285-90. Because these pages have stylistic similarities and are comparable in size and in the arrangement of the musical notation, Labriola hypothesizes that they may have come from the same gradual. The connection must remain tenuous, however, because what currently exist are some illuminated pages in their entirety and some cut-out decorated initials. Four pages and cut-out initials are in the Fondazione Cini in Venice: *Giudizio Finale, Ascensione di Cristo, Natività di Cristo,* and *San Giovanni Battista* (Figures 5-2 through 5-5). Two pages currently in the Free Library of Philadelphia are thought to be from the same gradual: *Madonna and Child and Two Worshippers* and the *Adoration of the Magi* (Figures 5-6 and 5-7).

The seventh page likely from the same series is the cut-out letter R with the *Resurrection and Three Marys at the Sepulchre* (Figure 5-8). The provenance of this work is of interest: Labriola's catalog noted that it entered the collection of H.P. Kraus after leaving the Martello collection in Fiesole,[88] but it is now in the Burke collection. The Kraus sales catalog that lists the Resurrection leaf includes the following description:

> A sophisticated degree of spatial articulation marks this masterfully executed initial produced in Siena in the last quarter of the 13th century. The illuminator's figural style is characterized by some precise peculiarities of form, including a predilection for vigorously marked outlines composed of short strokes of straight lines enhancing the stern and imposing quality of the figures. This

[88] Ibid.

feature is further underscored by the bright areas of color and ample folds of the drapery which lend a striking quality to their modeling.[89]

This description could also be applied to the Burke manuscript illumination, and it not surprising that after Labriola was apprised of the existence of the Burke manuscript, she tentatively assigned it to the same series, that is, from the gradual also represented in the Cini and Free Library collections.[90] The sizes of the illuminated Burke initial and the page, as well as the number of staves of musical notation are further similarities. The Burke miniature was the decoration of the beginning of the introit, the first and most important hymn in the Mass. As such, it may have received particular decorative emphasis.

The style of this collection of pages marks Primo Maestro's artistic evolution in several areas. While retaining an older, simple style that is essentially Florentine, he has perfected "his expressive modes, moving toward a narrative lyricism that refines the features...."[91] Labriola identifies in this group of works a fluid pictorialism of the figures that is consonant with the work of Dietisalvi: a "soft definition of the modeling with its simplified contours, with tracts of intense chromatism" similar to Dietisalvi's panels from

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[89] H.P. Krauss, Inc., *Catalogue 208: Performing Arts: Books on Music, Dance, Theatre, and Festivities* (New York: H.P. Kraus Inc., 1999), 44.

[90] Ada Labriola, personal conversation, May 6, 2004.

[91] "Il maestro affina i suoi mezzi espressivi, in direzione di un lirismo narrativo che ingentilische le fisionomie a rende più accostanti le raffigurazioni...." Labriola, 21.

The Life of Christ in the Pinacoteca.[92] The Burke manuscript likewise displays the intense colors, simple contours, and soft modeling that characterize the work of Dietisalvi, such as the figures in the crypt of the Duomo. The similarity of these features and Labriola's imprimatur may have led to Christie's tentative attribution of this work to Dietisalvi. As stated in Chapter 4, however, the artists differ sufficiently that such an attribution is not likely.

There is no clear evidence to identify the church for which this gradual, of which we have only these eight potential pages, was made. Labriola suggests that it is possible that this gradual was made for the Duomo of Siena, but erasures and errors in the text made it unacceptable, and it was given to a lesser church for its use. Or perhaps it fell into disuse because of its quality and was de-accessioned and thus cut up and dispersed. All *corali* known to have been made for the Duomo and actually used there are now housed in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.[93] Given that the Primo Maestro has been identified as working on a choirbook for the Duomo in Arezzo, it is also possible that this gradual was similarly commissioned by a church outside Siena. Further discussion of the nature of a possible commission is found in a subsequent chapter.

It is possible that this series of eight paintings constitutes the entire set of historiated initials from the dispersed gradual. An instructive comparison is the intact choirbook, Graduale 46-2, of the Siena Duomo (to which Primo Maestro contributed one painting: Figure 5-9); it contains only six historiated initials (that is, of the type similar to

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Labriola, personal conversation, November 11, 2004.

the Burke initial) and 267 decorated initials. The hypothesized dispersed gradual, in other words, contains a similar number of decorated works—only two more historiated initials than were produced for the Duomo Graduale 46-2. No more illuminations for this gradual may exist other than the Burke manuscript and the seven other related leaves.

The vast number of loose sheets held in various collections today represents an enormous investigative task for art historians. If manuscripts had been unfailingly decorated by the same artist, the task of associating the pages into coherent wholes would be easier. Yet even in the cases of larger panel paintings and altarpieces, painted by identifiable artists, if the works have been dismantled and dispersed (such as the Badia Ardenga panels), locating the related works has proven enormously difficult.

The most important commission upon which the Primo Maestro worked (and to which he owes his name) consisted of a set of choirbooks (*corali*) made for the Siena Duomo in the 1280s. Seven *corali* (five antiphoners and two graduals) are still intact today in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, preserved probably because they were part of the liturgical equipment of the most important church in Siena and thus were not mutilated. Primo Maestro's hand has been identified in four of these *corali*: 33-C (Figure 5-10 and 5-11), 34-D (Figure 5-12), 36-F (Figure 5-13 through 5-16), and 46-2 (Figure 5-9).

Labriola hypothesized that the books were commissioned in the 1280's "in connection with the activity of well-to-do, ambitious figures in the Chapter of Canons and in the Bishop's see," including members of the Malavolti family who had occupied

the post of Bishop of Siena and other important canonical posts since the 1270s.[94] It is also possible that their commissioning dates to the 1260s, when a significant extension and renewal of the Duomo choir were begun. They replaced *corali* from the Duomo of the 12th century and early part of the 13th century, a small number of which are today preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale of Siena.

These *corali* have been studied in depth, and this research has led to much of what we now know about manuscript illumination in Siena in the 13th century. Labriola cites the research of Milanesi (1850), Lusini (1911 and 1939), Toesca (1927 and 1951), and Conti (1979).[95] But she credits Giusti (1982), who identified the hands of seven anonymous artists as well as that of Memmo di Filippuccio, with the keenest examination of these *corali*, although Labriola does not fully agree with the attributions to Memmo assigning them instead to the Maestro dei Corali di Massa Marittima.

Giusti has suggested that the *corali* artists, despite the importance of the commission, were not necessarily the most accomplished painters. The need for the *corali* to be finished in short order because they had to be used in the liturgy required hiring multiple painters who could work quickly[96]. The task of illuminating the *corali* had been "assigned to the secular workshops of calligraphers and illuminators, since (as

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[94] Labriola, 30.

[95] Ibid., 31. I did not review these older studies.

[96] "C'est justement à l'urgence de l'achèvement de l'illustration et du décor des livres de choeur que semble due l'alternance de différentes mains, tellement variée et fréquente à l'intérieur des volumes que souvent elle ne respecte même pas la subdivision en cahiers." Giusti in Dini, 38.

Enzo Carli has already noted) there seems to be no evidence attesting to the presence of a scriptorium at the [Duomo]." [97] Assuring the homogeneity and consistent artistic standards of the illuminations does not appear to have been as important to the Opera of the Duomo as was the speed with which the paintings were done nor as important as the production of the script, which was assigned apparently to one workshop. This practice was not uncommon, however, especially in vast projects such as this.

The role and stature of Primo Maestro in this enterprise are difficult to characterize. If the gradual from which the Burke manuscript was cut was decorated entirely by Primo Maestro and was intended for the Duomo, his stature seems significant. However, undoubtedly referring to Primo Maestro, Giusti observes, "Les deux enlumineurs les plus largement représentés sont ceux dont le niveau est le plus modeste."[98] Moreover, Labriola states that, of the two graduals in this set of Duomo *corali*, one is the more accomplished and beautiful--*corale* 46-2—and Primo Maestro is credited with only one decorated initial in that book, an R with the *Resurrection and Marys at the Sepulchre* (Figure 5-9). We could argue alternatively that being chosen as one of only six illuminators to work on the Graduale 46-2 suggests some prominence. The other miniaturists who worked on this gradual she identifies as the Maestro del Graduale 45-1 and the Maestro dei *Corali* di Massa Marittima[99]. The other three *corali*

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[97] Labriola, 31.

[98] Giusti in Dini, 39.

[99] Labriola, personal conversation, November 11, 2004, and Labriola, 288.

on which Primo Maestro worked are antiphoners, less important liturgical books because used for the daily offices as opposed to the mass. Primo Maestro may have had some preeminence among the *corali* miniaturists precisely because his hand is identified in such a large number of paintings. Moreover, Labriola and Giusti credit him with the decoration of the entire Antifonario 36-F, which was also apparently the very first work in the series, done before the end of the 1280s. (Indicative perhaps of his stature is the fact that the earlier Burke painting was from an introit, one of the most important parts of a gradual. On the other hand, because of the evidence of the erasures on the Burke sheet, it is possible it was not originally intended to adorn an introit.) Another indication of the stature, or at least perhaps the competence and reliability of Primo Maestro, lies in the fact that about 1300, he is identified as painting 44 of the 46 illustrated initials in the Duomo's Lezionario G.1.2 now in the Biblioteca Comunale (Figure 5-17).

It would appear that painters of greater note and prominence began to undertake illumination of manuscripts in the later 13th century, supplementing or supplanting efforts by anonymous artisans. Bellosi reports that Guido da Graziano painted miniatures, and Labriola credits Rinaldo da Siena with several illuminations.[100] Primo Maestro might have worked in larger scale media that no longer exists; it is possible that he was well-known in his era.

Labriola suggests that Primo Maestro's style by the time of his work on the *corali* of the Duomo, that is, later than the period of the Burke gradual, has been influenced by

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[100] Bellosi, "Rinaldo da Siena," and Labriola, 260-261.

both Rinaldo and Duccio.[101] She sees a "new formal solemnity, through [a] classical formulation," a "neo-Hellenistic inflection," and "innovative figurative solutions."[102] It is interesting to note, however, that in *Corale* 33-C the illustration of *Cristo Benedicente e gli Apostoli* (Figure 5-10) displays neo-Hellenistic (that is, fuller and more classical) drapery on the figures as had already appeared in the drapery of the figures in the Burke manuscript (Figure 1-1). Also, as in the Burke and earlier manuscripts, the narrative aspect of the *corali* illustrations remains "entrusted to the representation of figures in the foreground, without the support of further scenic elements."[103] Giusti maintains that Primo Maestro "*se montre toutefois lié à une culture bien plus ancienne*:"[104] she finds traces of archaisms in his painting. By the time he painted the *corali* illuminations and despite some influence by Rinaldo and Duccio, Primo Maestro does not appear to have changed his style in any significantly new direction.

Nor does his style change much in later works attributed to Primo Maestro. In three illustrated initials for a Vatican choirbook, we see his characteristic, traditional bidimensional spatial structure. In the wealth of small (many are 1" by 2") illuminations he painted for the aforementioned *Lezionario* G.1.2 (Figure 5-17), Giusti suggests that his style has become more classicized, with more monumental compositions, figures more in

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[101] Labriola, 31.

[102] Ibid., 32.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Giusti in Dini, 53.

relief, an accentuated chiaroscuro, and intense coloration[105]. Despite these changes, however, she argues that he remains linked to his past, perhaps because he was older than most other miniaturists of this era.

> La marque de Coppo, qui malgré les alternances de style que l'on peut rencontrer dans le corpus des enluminures de cet artiste, en constitue l'aspect le plus caractéristique, pousse à supposer que la formation de l'enlumineur se soit déroulée entre les années 1260 et 1270, quand dans le cercle des peintres sous l'influence de Guido la marque du maître florentin était plus vive....[106]

Labriola, in apparent agreement, states that some Lezionario illuminations show only "timidly accentuated inflections of Gothic flavor."[107] The Lezionario represents perhaps the last set of works by Primo Maestro. He delineated two illuminations but had failed to paint them, and they were subsequently completed about 1330-40 by another artist.[108]

The style of Primo Maestro thus appears to have evolved only in modest ways throughout his career in the last quarter of the 13th century. However, his works differ sometimes significantly from each other in terms of their artistic merit. While I am not prepared to question the attribution I initially made of the Burke piece to the Primo Maestro, especially since that judgment was confirmed by Labriola, it is difficult to ignore differences between the Burke work and other illuminations attributed to Primo Maestro, even those that are considered contemporaneous or from the same book.

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[105] Giusti in Dini, 114.

[106] Giusti in Dini, 115.

[107] Labriola, 33.

[108] Labriola, personal communication, May 23, 2004.

Compare, for example, the spatial complexity of the *Last Judgment* from the Cini collection (Figure 5-2) or the expressive delineation of facial features of Christ in the Burke *Resurrection* (Figure 5-8) with the simplicity of the analogous aspects of the Burke Madonna and Child. The Burke Resurrection also has a much more elaborated initial and frame than what we see in the Burke illuminated "S" of the Madonna and Child. The *Cristo Benedicente tra due angeli e gli Apostoli* (Figure 5-1), which Labriola places about the time of the Arezzo *corale* or possibly the Burke gradual, shows a sophisticated spatial solution and arrangement of figures that humble even some later works he painted in the Duomo *corali.*

Another difference between the Burke illumination and others that does not pertain to aesthetic quality but is notable with regard to questions of attribution concerns a more decorative element. The Burke painting has background trapunto cross-hatching (dominated by a diamond shape) that appears in no other illumination; instead many works display a more predominant horizontal/vertical crossbar effect (see, for example, the *Ascensione di Cristo* in *Corale* 36-F, Figure 5-13). Many other decorative elements—the fine white filigree lines accentuated by tiny dots of white paint, the muscular letters with knobs or knots, the leaves (acanthus perhaps) depicted in profile—were repeated by Primo Maestro in many of his works.

Primo Maestro's Life

Little is known about the life of a miniaturist in this era. Maginnis' definitive work, *The World of the Early Sienese Painter*, based on a thorough examination of

Sienese historical records concerning the lives of painters of the Duecento and Trecento, fails to mention this class of painter.

Born about 1260, the life of Primo Maestro from the outset meshed with an important period in Siena's political and artistic history. As Maginnis describes[109], life for the Sienese artist significantly changed in the second half of the Duecento. Between 1260 and 1300, the population of Siena grew from 20,000 to 47,000, and Maginnis hypothesizes that much of the seachange in art at this time was attributable to the new vitality of urban life.[110] "Beginning in the 1260s...there appeared a new group of artists....Such success attended their art that for three decades they held Siena in thrall, shaping the expectations of patrons, determining their taste, and exerting what now appears as almost a stranglehold on Sienese commissions."[111]

It is likely that Primo Maestro was part or on the fringes of this group. In the 13th century, painters of greater stature than Primo Maestro were known to have worked in many arenas, including minor media: Rinaldo da Siena and Guido da Graziano painted miniatures, and Dietisalvi painted *Biccherna* covers. Before full recognition by his native city, even Duccio painted book covers, in 1279, 1285, 1292, 1294, and 1295.[112] We can

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[109] Maginnis, *World of Early Sienese Painter*. For further exhaustive detail, the reader is encouraged to consult this meticulous examination. Maginnis relies on a reading of the Painters' Guild Statute of the mid 14th century as well as painstaking perusal of *biccherne* and other archival data.

[110] Ibid., 23.

[111] Ibid., 9ff.

[112] Ibid., 276.

assume that Primo Maestro worked in other media, if not frescoes and panel paintings: Maginnis suggests that minor painters "must have gone from one comparatively small task to another: decorating book covers, signs, furniture, banners, poles for banners, chests, and candles to be presented in the Duomo."[113]

Primo Maestro remains, however, anonymous to us today. "Painters had an important place; but the age was not yet ready to make artists the heroic visionaries they became in the full-blown Renaissance...."[114] Documents regarding painters are fragmentary, even for one as renowned as Duccio. Evidence suggests that many artists of the era came to their profession through family affiliation (for example, the families of Memmo di Filippuccio and Ugolino di Nerio), but because we do not know Primo Maestro's name we cannot ascertain any such familial pattern. It is possible, of course, that Primo Maestro is in fact one of the many minor artists working in other media identified by name in archival records discussed by Maginnis[115], but such identification awaits further investigation.

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[113] Ibid., 194

[114] Ibid., 45.

[115] Ibid.

It is most likely that Primo Maestro was a native son of Siena. The Sienese apparently had no enthusiasm for 'foreign' painters. Between 1260 and 1360 only two non-Sienese painters are documented as having worked in the city.[116]

Most painters of this era lived in the districts of Sant'Egidio and San Donato, close to the Campo and the Via Francigena. This region was also close to San Domenico, and "a number of painters had close relations with the Dominicans."[117] Although there is no evidence, it is possible "that some painters belonged to the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin and Saint Dominic...[or were] members of the Compagnia di Santa Maria della Misericordia or simply affiliated with the Misericordia located at the heart of this district." [118]

As discussed in Chapter 2, no scriptorium was located in Siena's Duomo, and by the 13th century, both the illumination and copying of books in Italy were done primarily by lay professionals, especially in university cities. Scribes tended to move, while illuminators stayed in one locale, probably painting in workshops. The painters of this era discussed by Maginnis, he hypothesizes, probably worked in "artistic consortia,"[119] reflecting or causing the close proximity of their living arrangements. The collaborative efforts of such workshops on panel paintings and frescoes prevent the unequivocal

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[116] Hayden Maginnis, "The Sienese School," in *Sacred Treasures: Early Italian Paintings from Southern Collections,* ed. Perri Lee Roberts, 18-30 (Atlanta: Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 2002), 22.

[117] Maginnis, *World of Early Sienese Painter*, 51.

[118] Ibid., 51-52.

[119] Ibid., 90.

identification of many artists of the Duecento. However, because the scale of the miniature obviated the need for collaborative effort (collaboration occurred at the level of the book), manuscript illuminations allow for more definitive recognition of an artist's hand. Unfortunately artists working in this medium were apparently not identified in archival records.

Although it would be satisfying to link the identified work of Primo Maestro to an established name in the ranks of Duecento artists, his name and a catalog raisonné of his work are not essential to a full understanding of the Burke miniature. The next chapter turns to the cultural and historical milieu in an attempt to understand the iconography of this interesting little painting.

CHAPTER 6

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Equally as intriguing as the identity of its maker is the content of the Burke illumination. The role of the Madonna and Child in Sienese culture underlies their inclusion in this work, and thus understanding the nature of the illumination requires examination of that culture. More specifically, an explanation of such features of the illumination as the depiction of laypersons and the unusual gesture of the Madonna can only be approached through appreciation of the historical and cultural setting. Thus to elucidate the meaning of the illumination, we must turn to the larger context in which it was produced: the history and culture of Siena of the 13th century, particularly its latter half. This chapter examines political, economic and religious developments from the earliest era in Sienese history, for these developments ultimately resulted in the rich cultural environment that nurtured Primo Maestro and shaped the art of the era. This examination informs some tentative hypotheses in the following chapter about what the depiction may mean.

Early History

Siena's roots lie in the murky depths of Etruscan history. Etruscans preferred building their cities on top of hills, and Siena is nothing if not hilly. Recent excavations in the ancient Castelvecchio area have revealed Etruscan ruins. A common mythology,

however, that the city was founded by Seno and Aschio, sons of Remus, founder of Rome, is the source of Siena's civic emblem of the she-wolf and the twins. It is known that Romans captured the site and founded a military colony about the second half of the 1st century BC, building a fort that was subsequently surrounded by a small walled city. It was not an important center because of its distance from the consular roads that came north from Rome.[120] And the lack of a nearby major water source limited the growth of the city, despite the ingenious system of aqueducts and fountains the Romans built to tap and collect water from springs scattered through the Sienese hills, some of which are still functioning.

The Role of Travelers

Siena grew and took on a distinctive shape as Christian pilgrims in the Middle Ages and Renaissance traveled different paths from the north to Rome or from the south to Santiago de Compostela and other sacred sites (Figure 6-1). Many of these routes converged in or near Siena and were collectively called the Via Francigena (or the Via Romea, depending on the direction of travel). Routes met north of Siena in Fontebecci and continued south to the area of the Porta Camollia, the northernmost gate of Siena. Routes from the northwest traversed one ridgeline of Sienese hills, while routes from the northeast lay along another ridge. Hamlets developed along these two primary routes and were subsequently encompassed within the city walls. The Y-shaped city that resulted

[120] Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, *Historical Notes* (Siena: Monte dei Paschi, 1999), 7.

had three distinct districts, known as Terzi: the Camollia, the Citta or Castelvecchio, and San Martino. The city's heart remained the ancient Castelvecchio area, but *palazzi*, businesses, churches and hospitals grew up along the arms of the Y.[121] The city walls were rebuilt and extended several times to enclose new urban growth from the 11th through the 15th century.

From the time of the first Crusade in 1096-99, Crusaders had used the pilgrimage routes that passed through Siena en route to embarkation points further south. The Crusades continued into the 13th century, from the fourth Crusade, which resulted in the sack of Constantinople in 1204, to the last in 1291, when the Muslims captured the last Christian stronghold in Palestine. The Crusades introduced Europe to Byzantine art and a new world of trade; Siena was the beneficiary of both developments.

In conjunction with the pilgrimages and Crusades, the Order of Templars used pilgrimage routes. Founded in 1119 to protect pilgrims on their journeys to sites in the Holy Land, the Order was initially a kind of lay confraternity that adopted a penitential way of life and functioned as the military version of the Hospitallers, who provided shelter and medical care to pilgrims.[122] Detailed records of the formation of the Templars are scarce, perhaps because such records were destroyed when the Order, a somewhat problematic combination of monk and soldier, was suppressed forcibly in 1312.

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[121] Italo Moretti, *The Paths of the Via Francigena in the Sienese Region* (Montepulciano: Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 2003), 89.

[122] Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of The Order of The Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 6-7.

Originally encouraged by popes and nobility, they were supported by an extensive and expensive network of at least 870 castles, churches, preceptories and subsidiary houses throughout Europe. [123] Templar sites were built in Siena, Grosseto, Florence, Arezzo and other towns, "on or near the main routes leading to the pilgrimage centres at Rome and Monte Gargano and to the Adriatic ports of embarkation for the east."[124] By 1310, twenty-one Templar churches had been founded in central Italy between Rome and Gubbio[125]. Siena's Chiesa San Pietro alla Magione (Figure 6-2 and 6-3) was a Templari church. A minor Templar preceptory is recorded as near the village of Frosini, in Siena's *contado*, important for the wealth of its agriculture and mining and attractive to Sienese merchants and investors. (Because Frosini was located on the route to Massa Marittima and where routes from San Gimignano, Poggibonsi and Siena converged, it seems to have played a military and logistical role providing protection to pilgrims.[126])

The importance of travelers and pilgrims to Siena's history cannot be overstated. They determined the city's shape, brought wealth and cultural enrichment through the growth of trade and banking,[127] and enabled Siena to become an important regional center. The city served as the economic hub for settlements that grew up along routes in the Elsa River valley and beyond, and it oversaw the development of councils that

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[123] Ibid., 2.

[124] Ibid., 265.

[125] Ibid., 200.

[126] Ibid., 265.

[127] Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 11.

maintained the routes throughout the surrounding countryside, or *contado*. Within its walls, the shelters that the city provided for the pilgrims became important civic structures (like the Ospedale Santa Maria della Scala). The Via Francigena and the omnipresence of travelers permeated the lives of Sienese citizens in many ways and defined Siena directly and indirectly.

Political Developments

Sienese politics throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance were a complex stew of rivalries between religious and secular forces; nobles, merchants and middle class guilds; and local and foreign sources of power. The golden age of Sienese art can be linked to the relatively short era of stability in the early 14th century when Siena was governed by a benevolent oligarchy referred to as the Nine (consisting of three representatives from each of the three Terzi of the city), but art produced before that time by artists such as Primo Maestro led to the 14th century flowering just as surely as political developments prior to the Trecento led to the successes of the Nine.

The role of the church hierarchy in the governance of Siena began in the fourth century when St. Ansano (a patron saint of Siena martyred in 303) brought Christianity to Siena. In the middle of the fifth century, Siena was granted a bishop, a cathedral was built near the site of the Roman fort, and governance by a series of bishops began. St. Savino, another patron saint of Siena, is thought to have been the first bishop of Siena. By the tenth century, the religious, political and cultural heart of Siena, like other major urban sites in northern and central Italy, was its cathedral and attendant diocese. The

"major unit of church administration, headed by a bishop" provided stable government during this period,[128] and bishops "increased their authority until they were awarded temporal power by Emperor Henry III (mid eleventh century)."[129]

Siena, like other Italian city states, was also buffeted through the centuries by political developments beyond its boundaries. Beginning in 962 with the Ottonians, German kings waged "a bitter and vain struggle, centuries long, to impose some kind of central rule on their Italian territories. Their invincible opponents were Roman popes, feudal and Episcopal potentates, and a teeming expanse of self-willed cities."[130] The Holy Roman Emperors, as the German kings styled themselves, were backed by the powerful Hohenstaufen family of Swabia who took the title of Waiblingen (Ghibelline in Italian) from the name of their castle in Franconia. Lords of the house of Welf in Bavaria, however, were papal supporters, and the name Welf, in its Italian version Guelph, came to signify partisans of the Pope.[131]

In 1155, Frederick I Barbarossa, a Hohenstaufen prince and Duke of Swabia, entered Italy and was crowned emperor.[132] In 1186 he and his son granted the Sienese

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[128] Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 12.

[129] Tim Benton, "The three cities compared: urbanism," in *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400. Volume II: Case Studies,* ed. Diana Norman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 10.

[130] Martines, 7.

[131] Snyder, 320.

[132] Martines, 24.

"permission to mint their own coins and freedom to elect consuls...[and] full recognition from the Empire...." [133] Siena thus was identified among the ranks of Ghibelline supporters. Although many Sienese families were Guelph, they initially occupied few positions of power.

While foreign affairs impacted Sienese governance, internal power struggles continued. Although the ruling clergy consisted of nobles who were Sienese, a long-term effort by laymen to reduce the power of the bishops eventually led to the formation of a secular government. The beginnings of secular governmental structure can be traced to 1125, the date of the earliest documents indicating the power of the commune, "a sworn association of free men collectively holding some public authority...a collectivity of laymen, represented by consuls, [who] shared certain civic powers with the archbishop."[134] But because the first consuls were from noble families, it is clear that political power, be it lay or religious, lay in the hands of the nobles.

The role of the surrounding countryside, or *contado*, in Siena's political and economic history was critical. Because of its hilly location, Siena constantly struggled to guarantee its supply of food and water, for which it needed the political allegiance and support of residents of the *contado.* Many population centers in the *contado* had their own castles, parish churches and wealthy landowners, and in the 12th and 13th centuries, the Sienese commune fought for the allegiance of these aristocrats. The Duecento in

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[133] Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 7.

[134] Martines, 18.

particular was characterized by constant wars between the consular commune and these feudal lords. Defeated *contado* aristocrats were forced to establish residence within Siena for some part of the year. "The first great Sienese mercantile families emerged from the assimilation of this wealthy class of landowners into the families which were under the influence of the [Sienese] bishop's court."[135] Control of the *contado* also involved the struggle between religious and lay governance because much of the *contado* was under the control of the bishops. But "as early as 1186 there is an imperial charter stating the sovereignty of the city of Siena over the territories which belong to the bishop. From this it appears that the bishop's temporal affairs were subject to the jurisdiction of the city."[136] Florence too recognized the value of the *contado*, and villages to the north of Siena were the objects of frequent wars with the Florentines.

Because the scarcity of water prevented strong industrial growth, "it was mainly on commerce and banking that Siena's economy came to be based."[137] Banking was such an enormous enterprise that the Buonsignori family company, the Gran Tavola, established in 1209, became Europe's largest bank in the 13th century, with offices in every major city. Because much business was transacted north of the Alps, Sienese merchants and bankers often attended large trading fairs in France.[138] (Contact with

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[135] Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 11.

[136] K.Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy: Siena Cathedral in the Middle Ages* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1993), 16.

[137] Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 7.

[138] Ibid., 12.

Oltralpe culture may have facilitated the introduction of the Gothic to Sienese art in the 14th century.) By the late twelfth century, a new urban nobility (comprised, in part, of defeated *contado* aristocrats) with investments and engagements in trade and maritime ventures as well as important posts in the Church and commune had developed.[139]

Economic and political rivalries developed between these Sienese noble families, and from 1160 to 1260 this competition resulted in their erection of soaring urban fortresses, immense towers, often linked together, lining the streets[140] and effectively blocking off entire neighborhoods. Neighborhoods became known by the noble families who lived there: "a document of 1246 mentions 'the neighborhood of the sons of the Tolomei'."[141] The *contrade,* or districts, of Siena that still exist are rooted in this development, as the inhabitants of these neighborhoods became fiercely bonded.

Nobles not only fought each other but also other members of the community. As the city's population grew (from 20,000 in 1260 to 47,000 in 1300,[142] one of the largest cities in Europe), the 12th century saw a long period of conflict between the nobility and the *popolo* (middle and lower classes). Guilds had emerged around 1200[143] as "the first

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[139] Martines, 23-31.

[140] Ibid., 33.

[141] Ibid., 36.

[142] Maginnis, *World of Early Sienese Painter*, 23.

[143] The exact date of the formation of the Painters' Guild is unknown. While the earliest surviving version of its statute is dated 1356, indications within this document suggest a much earlier formation of the guild. Ibid., 84.

form of popular organization...[drawn] from the middle classes, not from the poor, the day laborers, or the unskilled. Tradesmen and merchants pressed into guilds in search of ways to stand up to the powerful men of the neighborhoods."[144] The first major clash between the *popolo* and the nobility, recorded in 1233, led to the inclusion of representatives from the *popolo*'s own magistracy, the Twenty-four, in the government. Although nobles continued to serve, a popular commune essentially replaced the noble consular commune, and a captain of the *popolo* was named to share power with the *podesta*, the chief magistrate initially appointed by the nobles in the early 12th century.

Because members of the Twenty-four[145] were Ghibelline and middle class, the *popolo* clashed with wealthy merchants, many of whom were Guelph. Although initially allied with the *popolo* in their struggle with the nobility, "after about 1250 or 1260, having fully achieved their aims and in fact now menaced by the political ambitions of the middle classes, [Guelph bankers and merchants] broke with the *popolo*"[146] and formed the Supreme Magistracy of the 36.[147] Some of the nobility were also Guelph, including for example the Tolomei and Albizi families.

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[144] Martines, 40.

[145] Interestingly, the *Allegory of Justice* painted in the meeting room of the Nine by Ambrogio in 1338-39 has 24 citizens, a reminder of the older government of Siena, and the glory time of the Ghibelline commune. William M. Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena under the Nine, 1287-1355* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 289.

[146] Martines, 61.

[147] Bowsky, 258.

The Guelph-Ghibelline rivalry extended beyond the city walls. Competition with Florentine bankers and merchants led to numerous wars between 1200 and 1250, pitting Guelph Florence against then Ghibelline Siena. Despite a victory over the Florentines at the Battle of Montaperti in 1260, "the verdict of the battle was to be reversed and the Sienese were to be forcibly brought back into the Guelf camp when they met defeat by the Florentines at Colle di Val d'Elsa in June 1269."[148] Moreover, in 1266, the Empire's King Manfred was defeated by Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily and papal partisan, and Conradin, the last Hohenstaufen claimant to the imperial title, died in 1268. Ghibelline power in both Florence and Siena was thus decimated. "From then on for over 80 years Siena was allied to Florence, the chief commune of the Tuscan Guelph League."[149]

These external developments merely reinforced the movement within Siena toward Guelph governance. After the wealthy merchants took control from the *popolo*, a constitution was written in 1274 that marked the beginning of a Guelph commune.[150] Around 1290, government by the group known as the Nine began. This commune consisted of three representatives from each of the three Terzi of the city and, although not truly democratic, this new mercantile oligarchy led Siena into a period of lengthy prosperity.

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[148] Diana Webb, *Patrons and Defenders: The Saints in the Italian City-States* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), 251.

[149] Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 8.

[150] Bowsky, 171.

Although the Montaperti battle remained a symbol and "undying memory of a glorious moment of victory over the old enemy,"[151] it is ironic that only when the Guelphs and Florence emerged victorious did Siena reach its full potential as an economic and cultural powerhouse. Ghibelline sympathies may not have run as deeply through the Sienese social fabric as is commonly thought. The old nobility and the middle class, being essentially pragmatic, may have recognized that the success of their city lay in the economic future represented by the merchants and in an allegiance to Florence.[152]

The 13th century also saw Siena engaged in a strong rivalry with Arezzo. The Sienese had a "free-wheeling [foreign] policy which included multiple wars against the Aretines, especially in the late 1280s.[153] The hostile relationship is interesting, given that the Primo Maestro is documented as having worked in Arezzo in the 1270s. Clearly political rivalries did not impede artistic interchange, with either Arezzo or Florence. Maginnis notes that "between 1260 and 1360, prominent Sienese painters (and even some minor ones) were called to work in Pisa, Lucca, Pistoia, Arezzo, Cortona, Perugia, Assisi,

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[151] Webb, 251.

[152] Martines argues for the enormous contributions of the *popolo* era: "The *popolo* made for the richest movement of men and issues in all the commune's history. It transformed perceptions of reality. The art of Giotto and his followers would have been impossible without the psychological stamp of the *popolo*....The *popolo*...by its sustained assaults on authority, altered the political and social organization of the old urban space and changed the disposition and thrust of values. This, in turn, had a pervasive effect upon imaginative literature, political thought, and historical writing." 58-9.

[153] Bowsky, 181.

and Orvieto, to say nothing of distant cities such as Naples and Avignon or of the numerous small communities in Tuscany and Umbria that acquired Sienese works."[154]

Religion in Siena

Religious developments were not only intertwined with the political history of Siena, but also affected every other sphere of Sienese life. The importance of religiously motivated pilgrimages to the formation of the city, both geographically and economically, has already been noted. The art and architecture of the city and the social affiliations of its citizens were also determined in large part by its religion.

The Duomo

The location and significance of the Siena Duomo (Figure 6-4) were indicative of the central role religion played in Sienese life. A series of cathedrals had been built in the heart of the city near the Castelvecchio (old Roman fort site) from the earliest days of the city's formation. It is possible that the original cathedral was built on the site of a Roman temple to Minerva.[155] A cathedral consecrated to the Virgin of the Assumption dated

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[154] Maginnis, *World of Painter*, 11.

[155] Cavallero quotes from Macchi's *Memorie* (written at the end of the 17th century and now in the Archivio di Stato di Siena): "In tempi molto antichi sotto la tribuna del Duomo, dove gia fu il tempio di Minerva." Daniella Gallavotti Cavallero, *Lo Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala in Siena: vicenda di una committenza artistica* (Siena: Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 1985), 381.

from at least the year 913.[156] In the 12th century, a new cathedral dedicated to the Virgin and roughly on the site of the present Duomo was dedicated in 1178 or 1179.[157] The *Ordo Officiorum Ecclesiae Senensis*, an ecclesiastical document dated to 1215 and attributed to Odericus, one of the cathedral canons,[158] contains some details of this old Romanesque church. However, the *Ordo* is concerned mainly with the liturgy and thus does not give an exact description of the cathedral or its precise location.

A new Duomo was begun sometime between 1215 and 1226, but took the rest of the century to reach completion, progressing through several phases of construction and modification. Considerable amounts of research have been devoted to the exact nature and timing of the various phases of the construction.[159] The choir was elevated above the nave because it was built atop a crypt. About 1260 it was completely renewed, with a single large, stone high altar (ornately sculpted and topped probably with a Maesta) located at the top of the steps to the choir, and behind the altar, were choir stalls within

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[156] Tim Benton, "The Design of Siena and Florence Duomos," in *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400. Volume II: Case Studies,* ed. Diana Norman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 130.

[157] Van der Ploeg, 38.

[158] The Ordo, or customary, is currently preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale in Siena and contains "precise and detailed guidelines for the performance of divine office, the celebration of the mass, the procedures to be followed on feast days, the order of precedence for processions and so on. [It] was probably a compilation of earlier, partially codified or wholly uncodified rules." Van der Ploeg, 63. A second Ordo was written at the beginning of the 14th century, and is also located in the Biblioteca Comunale. Ibid., 121.

[159] See Van der Ploeg, ibid., Chapter One, for a thorough discussion of the scholarship on the construction of the 13th century Duomo.

new carved stone *cancelli*. The cupola and the vaulting of the nave were completed not long after, in the 1260s, Nicola's pulpit in 1268, and the façade and its sculpture by Giovanni Pisano were in progress through the last decade of the 13th century.

Because the cathedral was built at the top of a hill, modifications and enlargements always presented significant construction problems. Retaining walls, ease of access, location of doors, and construction of stairways occupied much of the consuls' and Duomo engineers' thinking.[160]

One of the casualties of these locational problems was the cathedral crypt. The *Ordo officiorum* of 1215 indicated that a crypt had existed in the Romanesque church, but its exact location and nature have not been determined. Odericus states that the "chancel was raised above a large crypt containing three altars and the relics of a number of saints, including the city's four patron saints: Crescentius, Savinus, Ansanus, and Bartholomew...."[161] The new 13th century Duomo contained a crypt, but it was subject to numerous reworkings throughout the course of that century and the following one, and what remains today is only partially excavated and accessible. Documents indicate, however, that the four patron saints continued to be venerated at altars in the crypt throughout most of the 13th century.

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[160] See Van der Ploeg's discussion beginning on page 85 of the deliberations of the Great Council in 1259 on these matters, ibid.

[161] Benton, "The Design of Siena and Florence Duomos," 137.

Crypt remains have been found beneath the south aisle of the choir: "some wall fragments, the vestiges of pillars and the springings of the vault"[162] are accessible halfway down the side steps of the Duomo toward the Piazza San Giovanni (Figure 6-5). Significantly degraded frescoes in the crypt have been attributed to Dietisalvi and dated to the 1270s, the time of the second phase of Duomo construction. Van der Ploeg hypothesizes that originally the crypt would have been shallow, while in the second phase of Duomo construction it would have been made deeper, in line with the more impressive cathedral then being built[163] and thus accommodating of large frescoes.

Traces of a 13th century doorway from the crypt out to the Valle Piatta, where the baptistery was later built in the 14th century, are visible and would have given out onto a very steep hillside. The main entry to the crypt was through the Duomo itself where remains of a possible staircase have been found "next to the base of the attached column at the corner towards the transept."[164] It is very likely that a second staircase existed at the base of the attached column on the other side, allowing the clergy a processional loop in and out different doorways through the crypt, a liturgical procession as described in the *Ordo officiorum.*[165] The stairs to the crypt in San Miniato al Monte provide an indication as to how these entrances might have looked. When a new choir was built in 1317, the

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[162] Van der Ploeg, 54.

[163] Ibid., 57.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid., 58.

crypt had to be filled in to support the extended choir, and the relics of the patron saints—Crescentius, Savinus, Ansanus, and Victorinus[166]--were removed to the church above (and individual reliquary altars dedicated to each were eventually constructed).

Closely tied to the building program of the Duomo were plans for the Baptistery. The original Baptistery was located on the piazza between the Duomo and the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, to the southwest of the church. By the end of the 13th century, it had fallen into a state of dilapidation. Plans to enlarge the Duomo led fortuitously to a rebuilding of the Baptistery. Because of the "steepness of the escarpment falling away behind the choir...enormous substructures had to be built. These were so large that they could easily accommodate the [new] baptistery."[167] Giovanni Pisano was charged with building the new baptistery on that side of the Duomo, but work did not begin on San Giovanni Battista (the traditional name for baptisteries) until the early years of the 14th century. Thus until the end of the 13th century, the Duomo crypt remained accessible through a door at the east end, on the steep hillside.

The huge building program of the Duomo during the 13th century was under the control of a secular administrative body, and the influence of the bishop and the chapter was limited in matters of building and decoration.[168] The Opera del Duomo was headed

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[166] Sometime between 1288 and 1311, the widely known St. Bartholomew, who appeared in the choir window as one of Siena's patron saints, was replaced by the locally revered St. Victorinus who appeared in the honored fourth position in Duccio's *Maesta.*

[167] Van der Ploeg, 98.

[168] Ibid., 12.

by a lay *operaio* from 1226 through 1258, after which the Cistercian monks of San Galgano assumed this responsibility into the following century.[169] But the power of the Cistercians was limited; in 1259 it is documented that the Gran Consiglio (chief consul) asked a committee of laypersons to come up with a proposal for the layout of the choir of the Duomo.[170] The constitution of 1262 included "extensive provisions for the city's responsibility with regard to the cathedral."[171] The Duomo's history is emblematic of the interrelationship of Siena's secular and religious facets.

Parish and Mendicant Churches

Parish churches are a common feature of the Italian countryside and were also located within city walls. Norman notes that, "numerous parish churches ...could be found on nearly every street of late medieval and renaissance Siena...small in scale and simple in design."[172] These Sienese churches may have served the needs of pilgrims and Crusaders, for many of them are found along the Via Francigena in Siena, specifically what is now called the Via Montanini (Figures 6-2 and 6-6). The originally Romanesque Chiesa Sant'Andrea (Figure 6-6) today contains the Diocese offices of the Pellegrini of Siena. The Chiesa di S. Pellegrino alla Sapienza (Figure 6-7) administered by the Ordine

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[169] Ibid., 16-17.

[170] Ibid., 41.

[171] Ibid., 17.

[172] Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena,* 12.

Equestre del Santa Sepolcro di Gerusalemme attests to the abiding effect of those travelers. Like the mendicant churches, these small churches were endowed with altars and artworks contributed by members of the worshipping laity.[173]

"Historians have noted occasionally that the thirteenth was Italy's most religious century." [174] This characterization is attributable in large part to the growth of heretical movements, which had begun in the 11th and 12th centuries in cities but which were spread throughout the country by itinerants. Mendicant orders were formed during the 13th century to fight the heretics and meet the needs of emerging city populations that had spawned the heretical movements. Because heretics such as the Cathars denied the divine motherhood of Mary, one method the mendicants chose to oppose heresies was to insist on her central importance to Christianity.[175]

Siena saw the establishment in the early 13th century of orders of Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, Augustinians and Servites. The large Dominican church of San Domenico (Figure 6-8) was begun around 1225, and the Franciscan friary of San Francesco was built from 1247 to 1255. The Sienese commune supported the mendicant orders because of their contribution to civic stability. The mendicants met the needs of the "urban masses and those of the new commercial class....The friars helped much to

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[173] Ibid.

[174] Martines, 87.

[175] John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 27-28.

give cohesion to a society that was witnessing a rapid transition from feudal stability to a more dynamic rhythm...."[176]

Confraternities

One way in which the mendicant orders contributed to civic stability was their sponsorship and encouragement of the formation of lay confraternities. Mendicants recognized that the growth of heretical sects was a reaction to rigid papal strictures and that the devout needed outlets for individual spiritual expression. Peter of Verona, a Dominican friar also known as St. Peter Martyr, was one of the earliest organizers of a confraternity. In the 1240s, he established confraternities devoted to the Virgin, known as Societies of Faith. His presence in Tuscany was documented in 1244-45, when he founded a Marian confraternity and *ospedale* in Florence devoted to the care of pilgrims (now called the Bigallo).[177] He was assassinated by heretics in 1252[178]. The following decades saw the formation of confraternities throughout Italy.

Confraternities grew in popularity for a variety of reasons. While they undoubtedly drew on the individualist religious sentiments that had originally led to the formation of heretical sects, they benefited from other developments. Their devotion to the Virgin Mary was a key motivation: she had proven to be an exceptionally popular

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[176] Van der Ploeg, 161.

[177] Museo del Bigallo. *Guia*. Florence: Museo del Bigallo, 2004.

[178] The Catholic Community Forum. *Peter of Verona*. April 9, 2004. <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintp23.htm>

object of devotion. Her role as intercessor and her maternal image drew worshippers to seek any means of connecting with her, and Marian confraternities gave them an outlet beyond that provided within the formal church liturgy. Confraternities also grew by virtue of their affiliation with the contemporaneously emerging trade guilds; often the membership of the two groups was one and the same. They were also popular because they provided opportunities for social affiliation and mutual aid. Confraternities brought the religious experience closer to the individual, and the mendicant orders intentionally stimulated the development of private devotion. This approach led to the development and proliferation of smaller religious works such as polyptychs and other panel paintings for private devotional purpose.[179]

Two major types of confraternity, *laudesi* and *disciplinati*,[180] were established. The *disciplinati*, or flagellant, sodalities were similar to the monastic orders. They held services based on the monastic liturgy and were concerned with personal spiritual development and self-renunciation. Usually only male members of the elite classes, they concealed their identities by wearing hooded garments similar to those of friars, often with open backs that enabled them to self-flagellate. *Laudesi*, which were most prominent in the late 13th and early 14th centuries, were more concerned with public ritual and charity, and although they too wore habits, the robes did not conceal their identities. They held public services on major feastdays, using vernacular lauda, or hymns and texts

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[179] Van der Ploeg, 166.

[180] Henderson identified five types of religious sodality: *laudesi*, *disciplinati*, charitable societies, *fanciulli*, and artisanal, 34-40.

of praise, and devoted themselves to acts of public charity. Members of the *laudesi* confraternities were of mixed social class, prominent citizens as well as shopkeepers and artisans, and women were often members.[181] Siena appears to have particular significance for the development of the lauda confraternities: "The earliest documented confraternity performing vernacular laude has...been traced to San Domenico, Siena and to the year 1267...."[182]

Members of both *laudesi* and *disciplinati* groups had certain prescribed duties. They

> were to attend Mass and to hear the sermon....they were obliged to process and offer candles at specified altars, recite prayers and masses for deceased members, confess and take communion regularly, and conduct private, usually evening, services in which the special devotional activities of the company (such as lauda singing) was embedded in a liturgical framework of readings, prayers, recited or sung Latin liturgical items, and confession.[183]

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[181] Blake McDowell Wilson, *Music and Merchants: The Laudesi Companies of Republican Florence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 35.

[182] Gianna A. Mina, "Coppo di Marcovaldo's Madonna del Bordone: political statement or profession of faith?," in *Art, Politics, and Civic Religion in Central Italy 1261-1352*, eds. Joanna Cannon and Beth Williamson (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000), 273n. Also Webb, *Patrons and Defenders*, 260, who attributes this finding to Meersseman.

[183] Wilson, 34.

The confraternities of Siena met throughout the city, often but not always, in sites attached to churches. Several groups have been documented as meeting in the crypt beneath the Duomo,[184] and others met in rooms in the lower levels of the Ospedale[185].

Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala

The institution perhaps most illustrative of Siena's particular blend of religious and civic life was the Ospedale. Located across from the Duomo (Figure 6-9), the history of the Ospedale is deeply interwoven with the development of the city itself. Recent massive restoration has uncovered pre-Christian and Etruscan caves and passageways in the tufa hillside on which the hospital was built, as well as medieval storage rooms and haylofts in the lower levels. Its construction on the steep hillsides to the west of the Duomo clearly necessitated many interior and exterior staircases (Figures 6-10 and 6-11) and may have led to its designation as Santa Maria della Scala.

The Ospedale was the most famous of the various establishments that had emerged over the centuries to provide shelter, food and health care to pilgrims along the Via Francigena. About fifty of these small hospitals emerged in the Siena area,[186] "nearly

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[184] For example, the Compagnia di San Giovanni Battista della Morte, Van Der Ploeg, 59.

[185] See Enrico Toti, *Santa Maria della Scala* (Siena: Protagon Editori Toscani, 2003), as well as Cavallero.

[186] Siena was also known for its paid hospitality; "In 1288 there were about 90 hotels [registered in the Biccherna] in the city alone, the majority of located in the Camollia and San Martino districts." Moretti, 89.

all established as a result of legacies or donations....Built right opposite the cathedral, the Santa Maria was one of the first examples of a xenodochium (a pilgrims' hospice) and a hospital in Europe." [187] The Ospedale was perhaps also among the first to care for abandoned children and the poor in addition to pilgrims and the ill. From the mid-13th century, children left in front of the hospital were taken in, cared for, and educated. (Frescoes in the main hospital ward, the Pellegrinaio, by Lorenzo Vecchietta, Domenico di Bartolo, and others in the 15th century, portray the life of the foundlings and other aspects of hospital activity.)

Although local mythology suggests an older origin, the Ospedale was first mentioned in a deed of gift of 1090. The institution was founded and administered in its early years by the cathedral canons, but, as we have seen, it was very much the policy of the city to gain control over hitherto independent or religious institutions. By the late 12th century, the Ospedale had become a more secular enterprise, and in a papal bull in 1193 Pope Celestine III enabled hospital friars known as oblates to take over hospital administration from the cathedral canons. [188]

Forming what was essentially a type of semi-religious confraternity, the oblates of the Ospedale were a group of laymen devoted to the charitable operation of the hospital who had to dedicate all their personal wealth to the hospital. "Although they did not have to take solemn vows, they had to promise complete obedience to the rector [the leader of

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[187] Toti, 9.

[188] Ibid., 37.

the oblates] and commit their lives to the service of the Sienese hospital and that of the small hospitals in the surrounding area."[189]. While oblates were not required to live at S.M. della Scala, those who did were subject to strict rules: they had to wear a habit that bore the ladder emblem (Figure 6-12) of the hospital (the ladder being perhaps an indication of the hillside location), they could not marry, and they had to take part in communal prayer. They essentially renounced the world much as did members of religious orders[190].

The leader of the oblates was a rector, who also had to donate his wealth and his life to the hospital. "Since most rectors came from the city's wealthiest and most noble families, Santa Maria's patrimony was considerably increased." [191] The rector was originally elected by the hospital's religious administration, but after 1195, he was elected by consuls of the commune, reflecting the secular importance of and resulting governmental interest in the institution.

Donations and subsequent sales of property in the *contado* supported the hospital and ultimately brought it great wealth. Thus the Ospedale by the 13th century had become an important player in the area's economy and worthy of civic attention. Vast farmsteads, or *grance*, generated agricultural and other income. One such extant *granja*, the Cuna, (Figure 6-13) provides a good indication of the enormous architectural

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[189] Ibid., 42.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid., 9.

complexes that existed in the farmlands surrounding Siena and represented "the economic backbone of S.M. della Scala for almost five centuries...."[192] The Cuna still bears the emblem of the Ospedale (Figure 6-14).

Over the years, the Ospedale grew into a huge integrated complex, with few parallels among other Tuscan ecclesiastical or lay structures.[193] Part of this complex was the church of Santissima Annunziata, begun in the second half of the 13th century. In 1257, the rector of the Ospedale, Ranieri di Caccianeve, initiated the building of this oratory to accompany other contemporaneous expansions of the Ospedale.

> The church of the Santissima Annunziata was built on an older nucleus, at the end of the Thirteenth century, when Santa Maria was speeding up its expansion and the complex began to split up into various units that were assigned to the various activities carried out inside.[194]

The church continues to exist (Figure 6-15), but it is difficult to determine from its current appearance much of the original architectural or decorative scheme.[195] The

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[192] Ibid., 11. The Ambrogio frescoes in the Sala dei Nove in the Palazzo Pubblico depict the rich farmland surrounding Siena in the early 14th century.

[193] Stephan R. Epstein, *Alle origini della fattoria Toscana: L'ospedale della Scala di Siena e le sue terre (meta '200-meta '400)* (Firenze: Salimbeni, 1986), 271.

[194] Museum Santa Maria della Scala: Siena Mayority Institution, *Museum paths: Church of the Santissima Annunziata.* July 3, 2006. http://www.santamariadellascala.com/w2d3/v3/view/sms/luoghi--24/index_en.html

[195] Complesso Museale: Santa Maria della Scala: Istituzione del Comune di Siena, *Chiesa della Santissima Annunziata.* <http://www.santamaria.comune.siena.it/visita/annunziata/>
L'inizio della costruzione si fa risalire al 1257, a seguito di una richiesta avanzata pochi anni prima dal rettore dello Spedale, Ranieri di Caccianeve, il quale intendeva dotare il Santa Maria della Scala di un oratorio e di un sacerdote, proprio nel momento in cui

original church was oriented in the traditional east-west direction but in the 15th century was replaced with a church oriented north-south as we currently see it.[196]

That the church was important is without doubt. Prior to 1467, there was no clear division between the church and the entrance to the hospital,[197] indicating the central role ascribed to the religious life of the hospital. The embellishment of the church involved the most famous artists of the 13th and 14th centuries, another indication of its importance. A Crucifix attributed to Duccio and his workshop is still in the church. Norman has hypothesized that a polyptych in the Siena Pinacoteca painted by Duccio and assistants in 1305-1310, *The Virgin and Christ Child with Saints, Prophets and Angels*, may have been the high altarpiece for this church.[198] A *Virgin of the Assumption with Saint Thomas* from the 1360s also in the Pinacoteca, by Bartolommeo Bulgarini, was perhaps also an altarpiece for SS Annunziata. The exterior side wall of the current nave (Figure 6-15), visible on the Piazza del Duomo, (which would have been presumably the exterior wall

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l'istituzione stava accelerando la propria espansione. Il complesso si andava infatti suddividendo in "specializzazioni funzionali" e i vari "corpi di fabbrica" venivano quindi destinati alle numerose attività svolte all'interno dello Spedale.

Il nucleo della chiesa — completamente trasformato nella seconda metà del Quattrocento — corrispondeva in larga parte all'attuale zona centrale della facciata su piazza del Duomo, tuttora riconoscibile dai grandi conci di travertino. Vi si pose mano durante il rettorato di Niccolò di Gregorio Ricoveri (1467), dando corso ad un progetto di Guidoccio di Andrea dell'anno precedente.

[196] Van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces*, 64.

[197] Toti, 42.

[198] Diana Norman, "'A noble panel': Duccio's Maesta," in *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400. Volume II: Case Studies,* ed. Diana Norman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 61.

of the east, perhaps apse, end of SS Annunziata before its reorientation) was once decorated with a large fresco cycle of episodes from the Life of the Virgin (now lost) commissioned by the hospital from Simone Martini and the Lorenzettis in the early 14th century.

Civitas Virginis

A significant feature of life in Duecento Siena was the particular devotion its citizens paid the Virgin. Although Mary had assumed enormous popularity throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, Siena developed a particularly strong relationship with this saint. The connection that Sienese felt to the Virgin dates to at least 913 when an early cathedral was consecrated to the Virgin of the Assumption, as mentioned above.[199] All subsequent Duomos of the city continued to be dedicated to the Virgin, and as we have seen the Ospedale was also named for her. The *Ordo* of 1215 by Odericus also "codified a fervent veneration of the Virgin."[200] Odericus said that on the Feast of the Assumption, the Virgin's chief feast day and "the greatest day in the civic calendar" (and the day the Palio is run), the "cathedral...experienced a greater concourse of people than in the whole year" and that often there was tumult because of the crowds.[201] This may be the procession referred to as the *Corteo dei Ceri e dei Censi*, traceable to the early decades of

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[199] Benton, "The Design of Siena and Florence Duomos," 130.

[200] Van Os, 21.

[201] Webb, 21.

the 13th century. "In this ceremony the various parts of the community—from civic dignitaries to parishes and *contrade* and even individual citizens—each presented candles of varying value to the Virgin as part of the celebration of the feast of the Assumption."[202]

Of particular note in Siena was the express linkage established and reinforced by civic authorities between the Virgin and the city, its rulers and its populace. The Virgin was more than simply a patron of the city; she legitimized the ruling cliques, infused the people with pride and courage, and inspired elaborate processions and celebrations that joined civic and religious leaders in ceremonies that muddied the distinction between secular and religious purpose. This unique characteristic of Siena's relationship with the Virgin continued into the later decades of the 13th century and was upheld by the various Sienese governing powers, be they nobles, *popolo* or merchants.

One of the earliest signs of the involvement of secular authorities with the religious veneration of the Virgin dates to the late 1240s when documents record that "heralds went about reminding subject communities [in the *contado*], federate signori and citizens of their obligations...to demonstrate their obedience to the authority of the commune by doing reverence to its patron," the Virgin, on the day of the Feast of the Assumption, August 15th, a central landmark of the Sienese year,[203] as we know from

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[202] Gerald Parsons, *Siena, Civil Religion and the Sienese* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 2.

[203] Webb, 256.

Odericus. In 1252, Siena adopted a new civic seal with an image of the Virgin and an inscription invoking her protection of the city.[204]

The involvement of civic leaders in the works of the Duomo, which was dedicated to the Virgin, from early in the century has already been discussed. Laymen headed the Opera del Duomo from as early as 1226, and in the second half of the century, their control became more dominant. "The Sienese city fathers...intervened constantly in the building and decoration of the cathedral, the more so because in doing so they got the chance to turn the building into a shrine of local patriotism under the protection of the Virgin Mary who was 'localized' in a surprisingly straightforward manner."[205]

The event most commonly cited as the earliest manifestation of the civic devotion of Siena to the Virgin concerns the battle of Montaperti in 1260.[206] The cause for the battle was the consideration by Montalcino, a town in the *contado* to the south of Siena, of an alliance with Florence. On the eve of the battle with the Florentines, the Sienese, so the myth goes, dedicated their city to the Virgin and asked for her protection in front of her image on the high altar in the Duomo. The event was depicted two centuries later on a *biccherna* cover of 1483, which suggests that the altarpiece was the *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi*. The decisive victory in battle achieved by the Sienese after this dedication

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[204] Parsons, 2.

[205] Van der Ploeg, 21.

[206] Some historians, as described by Webb in a discussion beginning on page 253, have suggested that the Montaperti story is not true and that it was embellished by Sienese in the 15th century at a time when rivalry with Florence was high, in order to enhance Siena's history and show that the cult of the Virgin dated to the 13th century.

cemented their conviction that the city was protected by and had a special relationship with the Virgin.

The Guelph triumph at Colle Val d'Elsa in 1269, which reversed the results of Montaperti, did not alter the relationship. The cult of the Virgin had been so well established even before 1260 that she was not overthrown as a special patron of Siena.

> It was not conceivable that a Guelf regime would jettison the leadership of the Virgin, even if the Ghibellines had appealed to her and even if she was associated with Montaperti. She was the established civic patron, and the arrangements for her veneration...display an essential continuity through the years before and after 1260.[207]

Although the Virgin was venerated long before Montaperti, it is clear that after 1260 she became yet more important.

> The text of Montalcino's submission to Siena, drawn up four days after the battle, on 8 September, is highly suggestive....Mary is denoted [in the text] not only *defensatrix* but *gubernatrix* of Siena. These words are not applied to Mary in earlier texts recording submissions to the Sienese commune.... [208]

The Virgin, in other words, assumed a role closely linked to the government of the city.

This language also indicates that, while Sienese leaders used the Virgin to bestow legitimacy on their own rule, the concept of the Virgin herself as a ruler with secular authority was emerging about this time. Yalom notes that the theme of the coronation of the Virgin entered western iconography in the 12th century with its attendant images of Mary as a queen on a throne. Italian cities further interpreted this role, and the Virgin

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[207]Ibid., 256.

[208]Ibid.

was "not only understood as a queen, but became a 'surrogate monarch' in civic life...an authority in matters of judgment...in the court of heaven." Her "four principal feasts (the Assumption, the Annunciation, the Nativity, and the Purification) became public holidays with city-sponsored processions."[209] That the Sienese viewed the Virgin as ruler and governor is evident in that "two of the earliest Italian representations of the Coronation of the Virgin are Sienese: the stained-glass oculus designed for the cathedral in 1287 and a panel attributed to Guido da Siena." [210]

While the Battle of Montaperti apparently marked the official adoption of the Virgin as the city's patron, worship of the older patronal saints did not cease. As already discussed, altars and relics dedicated to the four saints of the city (Crescentius, Savinus, Ansanus, and Victorinus) were located in the crypt of the Duomo until 1317 at which time they were elevated, both literally and figuratively, to their own chapels in the Duomo above.

After 1260, the new civic status of the Virgin, however, led to forms of celebration and veneration of much larger scale and impact than had hitherto been accorded to either the patronal saints or the Virgin.

> Where a commune adopted the existing cathedral patron as its own [as Siena did], it was appropriating an existing ritual. The liturgical core of homage to the saint remained untouched, but the ancillary ceremonial, such as the processions which

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[209] Marilyn Yalom, *Birth of the Chess Queen* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 117.

[210] Webb, 264.

> culminated in the offering to the saint, was amplified and adapted in various ways to the purposes of the commune.[211]

The celebrations and its purposes were codified in law. Webb notes,

> The legal regulation of the patronal festival by the urban authorities was intended to ensure that this obligation to give thanks for benefits received by the whole city through the saint's intercession, day in, day out, was discharged by the urban community. The ceremonial was, of course, intended to be, simultaneously, a demonstration of obedience to the controlling authority which upheld and enforced the rights of the saint.[212]

Siena found many occasions on which to celebrate the Virgin and affirm civic authority. Her already recognized official feastdays became occasions for even more elaborate citywide processions in which participants carried candles along with images of the Virgin. The occasions

> afforded the rulers of the cities both the opportunity to display their own obedience to the heavenly powers (as prominent figures in procession and bearers of a handsome offering), and the power to exact demonstrations of obedience to civic authority: their authority, as symbolized in the altar of the saint.[213]

Duecento paintings of the Virgin, the *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi* and the *Madonna del Voto* (Figures 3-2 and 3-7), which may have adorned the main altar of the Duomo,[214] were later trimmed in size perhaps to enable their transport through the streets

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[211] Ibid., 15.

[212] Ibid., 17.

[213] Ibid., 27.

[214] Considerable research has been devoted to the question of which Madonna adorned which Duomo altar and when, and the scholars do not always agree. Although this is a fascinating topic, it is not the subject of this thesis. See, for example, Bram

during the processions. (Transportability of images remains important to the Sienese: even today the *Madonna del Voto* is removed from her chapel in the Duomo and placed on the main altar.[215]) The use of the Marian images in this way may have originated in the Montaperti dedication. Because the victory apparently stemmed from worship and dedication in front of a painting of the Virgin, the images themselves were seen as having power and hence warranting adoration by large numbers such as would line the streets during the festivals.

It appears that during the 13th century, the role of the clergy in the citywide processions had diminished. The *Ordo* of the early 14th century, referred to in an earlier section, describes liturgical practice in effect at that time. It is notable that, by about 1300, the liturgy remained basically "that [which] Odericus had described meticulously in 1215... [but] some of the rituals have been simplified. Especially the clergy's presence outside the cathedral in solemn processions has diminished considerably." [216] Presumably their role in the celebrations had been usurped by the city fathers.

The devotional celebrations were sources of funds for the city's coffers, legally enshrined and enforced on the *contado* as well. It was

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Kempers, "Icons, Altarpieces, and Civic Ritual in Siena Cathedral, 1100-1530," in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 89-136; Van Os; and Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena*, for further discussion of this topic.

[215] Parsons, xiv.

[216] Van der Ploeg, 165.

> a matter of especial concern to the civic authorities that the city's saint or saints would be seen to exert their spiritual authority over the whole area that the city claimed to rule. Both the citizens who dwelled within the walls and representatives of rural subject communities rendered a legally stipulated offering at the shrine on the patron's major feast-day. The former were organized into a procession, on the basis of either guild membership or neighbourhood, which traversed the city along a prescribed route....Their presence and their offering were formally registered. In both cases, there were fines for non-performance and incentives for informers.[217]

Often the offering was in the form of candles, which were of particular value in the 13th century. "In the statute compiled after 1274 by the Guelf government...all [subject communities] were to render on the vigil of the Assumption offerings of candles determined on a tariff related to the amount of tribute they paid annually to the commune."[218] While the festivals of the earlier 13th century had been largely determined by tradition, by the end of the century they were highly regularized, primarily through the statutes of 1262 and 1274.[219]

The cult of the Virgin received further reinforcement from agencies outside the civic authorities. The mendicant orders and their associated confraternities helped the growth of Marian devotional fervor.

> It is quite impossible to say whether one order did more to encourage this Mariolatry than another....Whether it was the Servites, those 'servants of Blessed Mary', or the Carmelites, whose claim to be the earliest adherents of the Virgin derived from their origins in the Holy Land, all the new orders subscribed to her veneration in one way or another.[220]

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[217] Webb, 18.

[218] Ibid., 257.

[219] Ibid., 111.

[220] Van Os, 21.

The Golden Legend, which included the purported life of the Virgin, may have played a role. It was compiled by the Dominican Archbishop of Genoa, Jacobus de Voragine, about this time (1280).[221] The Virgin's "role in the charitable civic piety of the confraternities, burgeoning in Tuscany at precisely this period, showed that she laboured at all times to establish social peace and order...." [222]

The mendicant role in Siena's devotion to the Virgin extended also to the commissioning of Marian images. In fact, some of the best preserved (perhaps overpainted but at least not trimmed in size) Madonnas in Siena are those that were painted for the mendicant churches (cf. the *Bordone* and the *San Domenico Madonna,* Figures 3-4 and 3-6) and often commissioned by their associated confraternities. Norman has hypothesized that the *San Domenico Madonna* was commissioned from Guido by the *Laudesi* Company of the Virgin and Saint Dominic.[223]

In summary, the era during which Primo Maestro lived and worked was a time of transition in the history of Siena, from the turmoil of wars with Florence in the middle of the century to the economic vitality and political stability of governance by the Nove at the end of the century. His skills would have been in great demand, not only for

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[221] Perri Lee Roberts, "Painting and Religious Experience in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy," in *Sacred Treasures: Early Italian Paintings from Southern Collections,* ed. Perri Lee Roberts (Atlanta: Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 2002), 4.

[222] Webb, 256.

[223] Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena*, 53.

manuscript illumination but most probably for other religious purposes such as panel painting or banner and candle decoration, as religious observance and celebration, primarily in service to the Virgin, permeated every aspect of Sienese life.

CHAPTER 7

THE MEANING

The Burke illumination (Figure 1-1) reveals much about Siena in the latter half of the 13th century. The nature of the figures depicted and the manner of their depiction are both informative. While the inclusion of the Madonna and Child would not be unexpected in a painting from this era, especially one that illuminated the important first hymn of the Mass, the group in the lower lobe may be construed as having particular significance. This chapter explores the identity of this group as a key to the content of the Burke illumination and posits hypotheses about its meaning.

An initial attempt to understand the content of this painting might begin with the text on the page it adorns. However the text of the Introit that begins with this S, *Spiritus domini replevit orbem terrarum*, being standard liturgical language, does not bear any obvious relationship to the painting's content. Miniaturists used the shape of the initial letter as a guide to their painting's content more often than the meaning of the words in the accompanying text; that seems to be the case here.

The painting would appear to follow a traditional formula used in manuscript illumination. Most miniatures of this era included traditional cult images, religious figures or Biblical scenes. The paintings of Primo Maestro for the Siena Duomo *corali,* for example, depict Christ's Ascension, Baptism and Resurrection, portraits of various

saints, and similar Biblical subject matter. Thus, as might be expected, Primo Maestro has painted a Madonna and Child in the upper lobe of the S.

As discussed previously, the Madonna and Child type was well established in Siena by 1285, the hypothesized date of the Burke illumination. Initially following Byzantine tradition, including the Hodegetria type, Sienese painters over the 13th century evolved their distinct version of the motif encompassing, for example, the *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi* (Figure 3-2). By 1280, Primo Maestro would have been familiar with many existing large scale paintings of the Madonna and Child[224] because they were on public view in the Duomo and the churches of the mendicant orders.

Although Sienese painters had evolved their own stylistic versions of the iconic image, none had painted the Madonna in quite the way Primo Maestro has done here, with her right hand extended outwards. The prevalent Madonna of Hodegetria mode is shown with her hand presenting Christ to the viewer. In an evolved formulation, the Madonna's hand is engaged in holding or touching the Child. (In Coppo's *Bordone Madonna* in Figure 3-4, for example, the Virgin holds Christ's foot.) Review of miniatures, frescoes, altarpieces and panel paintings of this era revealed no comparable pose to that used by Primo Maestro. The *Madonna of the Franciscans* by Duccio of 1280 has a divergent hand position, but this is attributable to the fact that Duccio's work is not the iconic type, but rather a Madonna of Mercy.

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[224] The Madonnas he could have seen include: *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi, Madonna del Voto, San Bernardino Madonna, Galli-Dunn Madonna, San Domenico Madonna,* and the *Bordone Madonna.*

Manuscripts were often illuminated in ways that were more innovative than larger paintings, as miniaturists seemed to feel greater freedom to experiment with narrative iconography and compositional solutions. Patrons commissioning larger works usually specified the nature of the depiction, while miniaturists most probably did not have such constraints. As a result, these small pictures often herald new artistic developments. Manuscripts also conveyed a richer portrait of the activities of the era than is found in more monumental works. In the Burke illumination, Primo Maestro does both: he digresses from the prevailing artistic mode, and he gives the viewer a more detailed narrative portrayal.

Primo Maestro's work conveys a new artistic convention that was emerging at this time: a movement toward greater naturalism and realism. Because of the simple change in arm position, this artist has conveyed that the Madonna is human. She is not simply a cult image, designed to evoke expected and unquestioned responses in the worshipper. The impulse toward naturalism and mimesis is seen at this time not only in miniatures but also in the predellae that accompany altarpieces. While painters may have been constrained to retain traditional images in the main painting, they showed holy figures in more human ways in smaller peripheral scenes or predellae. (See for example the *San Pietro in trono* of 1280, Figure 7-1). But even the major figures of altarpieces are painted with greater naturalism; although their poses may be traditional, the manner in which their bodies and drapery are conveyed assumes greater realism in the second half of the 13th century.

The Primo Maestro is not only displaying exciting new currents of realistic depiction, but, with relevance to this discussion of the work's meaning, he is also using the illumination with its enhanced naturalism to narrative purpose. We sense that the Madonna's unusual hand gesture is related to a story or historia concerning the group in the lower lobe of the S. The nature of this group is also unusual.

While most miniatures of this era depicted only religious subject matter and personages, Primo Maestro has included a group of laypersons in the lower register. The use of this unusual iconographic element reinforces the narrative impression. The painting apparently shows some sort of procession: the figures are in a line, candles (as were typically carried in religious processions) are present, and the banner, also typical of processions, suggests the group may be affiliated in some way. The particularly realistic details of the stairs, the candles without candlesticks[225], and the individualized hair, costume and faces of the figures would be gratuitous without narrative meaning.

Some features of the illumination may hold symbolic meaning without narrative intent. The stairs (*gradus* in Latin) may simply reference the gradual from which this illumination is taken. A gradual contains the music of the mass but originally referred to the music sung between the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel, with the term

[225] Residents of Siena and its *contado* were required by law to carry candles as offerings. But, further, according to a city statute of 1262, in order to avoid civic disorder (presumably lethal fights) people were not to carry candlesticks or face a fine of 100 soldi; the two members of the procession here who hold candles do not carry candlesticks. Webb, 257-8.

"gradual" deriving from "the steps ('gradus') where the Epistle was read."[226] It is also possible that the steps symbolically allude to the concept derived from "a medieval text attributed to St. Augustine in which Mary was likened to a stairway by which God came down to earth as Jesus, and by which we mortals may ascend to heaven."[227] Mary is often referred to as the "Stairway to Heaven." While Primo Maestro may have intended both or either of these symbolic references, it does not rule out the conclusion that his painting has narrative meaning; in fact, such symbolism enriches the narrative intent.

Primo's narrative impulse again reflects developments that were to become widespread in more monumental forms of art somewhat later. Much of this new direction was inspired by the publication of the Golden Legend by the Dominican Archbishop of Genoa, Jacobus de Voragine, in about 1280;[228] these narratives of the lives of the saints inspired artists with new iconographical material. Later, by the 14th century, Sienese painters often linked holy figures with ordinary lay people and depicted holy figures in more lifelike ways.[229] The concepts of spirituality and worship broadened during this era, and cult images alone were no longer the sole means of inducing devotion. Narrative religious art became more common, with the use of predellae

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[226] De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, 222.

[227] Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 28.

[228] Roberts, "Painting and Religious Experience in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy," 4.

[229] Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena,* 122.

accompanying altarpieces, and with monumental narrative schemes such as the Assisi frescoes and Duccio's Maesta.

Although it is apparent that the Burke illumination is a narrative, what is being depicted is not immediately clear. Determining the identity of the processors is central to determining the meaning of the work as a whole. Several hypotheses will be examined.

A Confraternity

The group may possibly represent members of a confraternity. The prevalence and popularity of confraternities in later 13th century Italy has been discussed. Research on Sienese confraternities, however, apparently lags behind that in Florence, and more work in the Siena archives needs to be done. It was difficult to discover and sort out the various Sienese confraternities that met criteria for identification as subjects of Primo Maestro's work.

However, several basic observations concerning this identification can be made. If the Burke figures were a confraternity, it would most probably be a group of *laudesi* as opposed to *disciplinati* because of the lack of anonymous hooded habits. The presence of a woman at the far left[230] also argues against *disciplinati*, as confraternities of that type did not admit women. *Laudesi* confraternities have commonly been associated with processions; participating in processions and offering candles were, in fact, listed as

[230] Ada Labriola concurred with my identification of this figure as female.

specified duties by their orders.[231] Processing gave them an opportunity to sing lauds in public and glorify their patron saint, in this case the Virgin Mary.

Candles, such as those displayed here, played a major role in the activities of confraternities, both in their processions and in their finances, and as such suggest these figures are *confratelli.* Bowsky reports that for one confraternity in 1316-22, candles accounted for more than 90 percent of their expenditures.[232] To feature candles in a procession of confraternity members would not only be expected, it would also do honor to the confraternity.

The presence of the Madonna and Child here does not militate against the confraternity identification and in fact may support it. Confraternities were associated at the outset with Marian worship, and confraternities dedicated to the Virgin outnumbered those dedicated to other saints. Several confraternities of this era are known to have commissioned paintings of the Virgin--Guido's *San Domenico Madonna* and the *Rucellai Madonna* by Duccio, to name two notable examples. The reverence of the Virgin implied in Primo Maestro's piece may reinforce the notion, mentioned earlier in conjunction with the erasures, that this work was intended for another section of the gradual, perhaps a day of the Christian calendar devoted to a Marian celebration.

Elements in the Burke illumination help narrow the search to several potential confraternities. The presence of the stairs here is an important feature. Stairs might indicate that the group was about to ascend from their meeting place to take part in a

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[231] Wilson, 34.

[232] Bowsky, 265.

procession or were at the start of a procession. The Madonna and Child image above could, in this scenario, represent an altarpiece *in situ* in a church, being approached from below by the processors. Confraternity chapels would "normally [be] in an enclosed space on the premises of the church to which it was attached"[233]—often in the lower level of a church. Processions thus would pass through a church interior; while the procession usually circumnavigated the city, the entirety of their route was not always outdoors.[234]

A number of confraternities meet this criterion. Several met in the crypt below the Duomo at the time that Primo Maestro would have worked on this gradual, and the crypt gave onto a number of stairways leading up to the Duomo, any one of which might be that depicted here. The Fraterniti Sancte Marie is recorded as meeting as early as 1222 in the Duomo. Whether this is the same group as that known as the company of the Madonna Sotto Il Duomo which originated in "*tempi molto antichi Sotto la tribuna del Duomo....con lo scopo di riunire 'gentiluomini, o cavalieri, o titolati'*" is not known.[235] The Compagnia di San Giovanni Battista della Morte is also recorded as meeting in the crypt.[236] Finally Macchi notes the presence of the Compagnia della B.V. Maria in the Duomo in 1325.[237] Any such confraternity meeting in the crypt might have processed past

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[233] Henderson, 78.

[234] Henderson, 90.

[235] Macchi as quoted in Cavallero, 381.

[236] Van Der Ploeg, 59.

[237] Macchi as quoted in Cavallero, 381.

a Madonna located on the main altarpiece or a side chapel altarpiece, locations hypothesized during this era for the *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi* and the *Madonna del Voto*. However, the fact that the altars in the crypt were dedicated to the existing traditional patron saints of the city and not to the Virgin raises questions as to the exact location of the meeting place for Marian confraternities described as "Sotto il Duomo."

Alternatively, the inclusion of the stairway gives rise to the hypothesis that the confraternity might have been housed in the Ospedale, and several confraternities have been documented as meeting in the lower levels of that complex. Because the Ospedale's church, Ss. Annunziata, was located on the level of the piazza of the Duomo, confraternity members would have had to mount stairs that would have led them past a highly probable altarpiece of the Madonna and Child in Ss. Annunziata[238]. Although several oratories were located throughout the complex, because they were dedicated to other saints, it is unlikely they would have had images of the Madonna as depicted here.

Cavallero writes of three separate confraternities that met in the Ospedale, "sotto le volte:" Santa Maria, Santa Catarina, and San Girolamo. Because the latter two did not claim the Virgin as their patron, it is doubtful that they would be depicted in a painting with the Virgin such as Primo Maestro's miniature. Moreover, the confraternity of San Girolamo apparently only came to the Ospedale in 1443, and the confraternity devoted to Siena's own Santa Catarina (who was said to come pray and even sleep in what is now

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[238] Personal communication with Ada Labriola, December 1, 2004: "We know very little about the old church of the Spedale. At the end of the 13th century, it was a little church, officiated by the canonici of the Duomo."

her oratory in the Ospedale) was undoubtedly formed after her death in 1380. [239] Another report, however, states that, prior to its designation in honor of Catherine in 1479, it was named in honor of S. Michele Arcangelo. This group later fused with another confraternity from under the Duomo, perhaps also dedicated to St. Catherine or St. Michael.[240]

The confraternity of Santa Maria mentioned by Cavallero was formed by the conjunction in 1350 of three pre-existing confraternities: the confraternity of Gesu Crocifisso[241], which had organized around 1250 in the San Bernardino oratory and San Nicolò in Sasso church; the confraternity of Madonna Sotto Il Duomo (mentioned above with reference to the crypt of the Duomo); and the confraternity of *disciplinati* di N.S. Gesu Cristo Sotto le Volte dello Spedale. All three of these became known as the Disciplinati of Maria Santissima Sotto Le Volte dello Spedale.[242]

Of the three mentioned by Cavallero, only the first, the confraternity of Gesu Crocifisso, is a possible Ospedale confraternity linkable to the Primo Maestro painting.

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[239] This group probably became known in 1479 as Santa Catarina della Notte, and a museum of their artifacts continues to exist in the Ospedale.

[240] Cavallero, 398.

[241] Vecchietta painted the Raccomandati di Gesu Cristo Crocifisso as flagellants receiving a sermon from San Bernardino, who died in 1444. Henderson notes that this confraternity met in the Ospedale at least as early as 1295, so it is probably the group identified by Cavallero. Henderson, 116.

[242] This discussion about Ospedale confraternities is taken from Cavallero beginning on page 381. Interestingly, this last confraternity became the Societa di Esecutori di Pie Disposizioni in 1785 and continues to exist today although it was removed from the Ospedale in 1911-15.

The confraternity of Madonna Sotto Il Duomo was presumably meeting in the Duomo crypt up until 1317, when the crypt was filled in, and the confraternity of N.S. Gesu Cristo consisted of *disciplinati*. The confraternity of Gesu Crocifisso may have already been meeting in the Ospedale at the time of Primo Maestro's painting, but it is not known if it was *laudesi* or *disciplinati*.

It was not unusual for confraternities to move back and forth between the Duomo and the Ospedale. The situation was fluid, depending on changes in the rectors of the Ospedale and the availability of rooms. The opportunistic location of confraternities is supported by documentary evidence suggesting they were often placed in cold basements and had great need of firewood; many requests for firewood and changes of room are recorded.[243]

If Primo Maestro's painting represents an exterior scene, the stairway might be one of the many that characterize Siena and its hills. An antecedent of the stairway that currently mounts the hill to the south of the current cathedral from the Valle Piatta (now the Piazza San Giovanni) may be represented (Figure 7-2). This stairway would have led to an access to the crypt from the Valle Piatta or perhaps an antecedent of the current south door to the crypt. The stairway, of course, would also have led up to the Piazza del Duomo and hence provided access to the Ospedale for any of the confraternities located there. The Ospedale was built on a prominent hill and is flanked by steep exterior alleys that might form the basis of the scene depicted here (Figure 6-10). Finally the mendicant

[243] Personal conversation with Susan Scott, librarian of the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.

churches San Domenico (Figure 6-8) and San Francesco in Siena are built at the top of escarpments; a confraternity associated with either of those churches might readily be depicted as mounting a stairway.

If this were indeed an exterior scene, the image of the Madonna and Child might represent not an altarpiece, but a painted icon being carried in the procession (by unseen figures) much as it is hypothesized that the *Madonna del Voto* and the *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi* paintings were cut down and removed from the Duomo on the Virgin's feast days and transported throughout Siena. The Madonna and Child in the Burke illumination may even be construed as a loose depiction of the actual painting of the *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi*, given that the painted halo here appears to project outward just as does the stuccoed halo of the *Occhi Grossi.* Or the image being transported might be a smaller panel painting, such as were being increasingly produced in this era at the behest of the mendicant orders and their confraternities to enhance devotion by individuals or groups (such as confraternities) smaller than large church congregations. Confraternities also made wax models of their patron saints, including the Virgin, and carried these in procession.[244]

Further support for the notion that the figures depicted here are members of a confraternity stems from the presence of the banner—a red cross on white ground—carried by the leader of the procession. Banners and standards had been important

[244] Henderson, 90.

components of confraternity identity since the earliest sodalities, the Societies of Faith.[245] Moreover, it was common during processions for members to carry the arms of their confraternity on an escutcheon. [246] Because the banner represented such an important potential clue to the identity of the processors, extensive research into its possible meaning was conducted.

The banner adopted by the Societies of Faith formed by St. Peter Martyr in the 1240s displayed a red cross. This symbol was chosen apparently because members of the Societies wanted to de-emphasize weapons in their battles against the heretics.[247] In the church of San Domenico, a prominent sponsor of confraternities, red crosses are painted on the walls of the nave and transepts, referring perhaps to St. Peter Martyr's use of the symbol on his standard (Figure 7-3). St. Peter is commonly portrayed in paintings as holding a banner with a red cross, to "symbolize his role as leader of the army of the faithful against heresy."[248] In a painting in Florence's Bigallo Museum, St. Peter is depicted giving such banners to confraternity captains (Figure 7-4). However, nothing in the Burke illumination is reflective of a Dominican connection. Dominicans liked to portray themselves, and if this were a confraternity with a Dominican connection, there

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[245] Henderson, 94.

[246] Wilson, 36.

[247] Henderson, 26.

[248] Henderson, 90.

would likely be Dominican friars in the painting itself or in the decorative elements along its margins.[249]

The red cross is also part of the current escutcheon of the Arciconfraternità di Misericordia, which continues to operate today in Siena (Figure 7-5). The Confraternità was founded in Siena in 1250 by Beato Andrea Gallerani. Misericordia groups sprang up all over Italy, and a common Madonna of Mercy image emerged, with the Virgin sheltering the faithful under her cloak. Although depictions of the Madonna della Misericordia with confraternity and consorella members were common in the 14th century and later,[250] none have been discovered that included a banner with a red cross. The Misericordia differed somewhat from *laudesi* and *disciplinati* confraternities, falling in a group of confraternities that were more like charitable auxiliaries. These were private corporations and functioned with hospitals to provide the "main system of institutional poor relief in the city."[251]

San Michele Arcangelo is often depicted with a red cross on his shield[252], and he appears to have had salience for the people of Siena. As mentioned above, a confraternity devoted to him existed in Siena, renamed in 1479 as the Santa Catarina

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[249] Personal communication, Ada Labriola, November 11, 2004.

[250] See, for example, those by Piero della Francesca of 1450 and Barnaba da Modena c. 1345.

[251] Henderson, 34.

[252] See, for example, the Maestro della Cappella Rinuccini painting of 1360 of *SS. Michele Arcangelo, Bartolomeo, Giuliano and a donor* and Bernardo Daddi and Puccio di Simone, *Crucifixion and Saints* of 1340, both in the Uffizi.

della Notte. According to the *Ordo* of Odericus, an altar dedicated to San Michele existed in the Duomo in the early 13th century.[253] The altar was still there in 1323, and a mosaic of San Michele was on a corner of the façade of the Duomo in 1358.[254] Ambrogio Lorenzetti painted *The Presentation in the Temple* in 1337 for the Duomo's San Crescenzio chapel with a now-lost depiction of San Michele on a flanking panel.[255] It would not be unusual for a confraternity associated with this saint to use the red cross as its coat of arms. Whether the confraternity met in the Duomo is unknown. It is possible they met near an abbey dedicated to San Michele Arcangelo and founded by Vallombrosan (Benedictine) monks in the 11th century to provide help to pilgrims and located on the Poggio of San Donato along the Via Francigena in Siena. Documents record that in 1287 the abbot of the abbey ordered that the activities of a confraternity should be continually praised. There are records, however, that this confraternity was flagellant and hence perhaps unrelated to Primo Maestro's work. The monastery was suppressed in 1464, and the abbey is no longer there, commemorated in name only by the Piazza dell'Abadia behind the current Monte dei Paschi complex. The San Donato church is now literally inside the bank's building.[256] The confraternity was reconstituted

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[253] Kempers, 95.

[254] Maginnis, *World of Early Sienese Painter*, 136-7.

[255] Ibid., 139.

[256] The sources of this information are R. Davidson, *History of Florence*, written in1908 and currently in the archives of the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo and conversations with the librarian of that institution, Susan Scott, along with personal reconnaissance.

as the Compagnia San Ignacio. The relationship between San Michele and Santa Catarina is unknown, other than the renaming of the confraternity mentioned above. However, a portrayal of Santa Catarina in the Siena Pinacoteca by Domenico Beccafumi (cat. 417) shows her apparently receiving a red cross.

Several *disciplinati* confraternities in this era were associated with the red cross. A predella painting of c. 1400 by Martino di Bartolommeo (now in the Monte dei Paschi collection) for an altarpiece commissioned by a confraternity housed in San Pietro alla Magione depicts the *confratelli* wearing white robes with red crosses. A predella painting of a funeral scene of a flagellant confraternity in an unknown city by Paolo di Stephano of 1328 now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge shows similar garb. We also find the red cross in a manuscript illumination of mid 15th century Venice, depicting the Virgin and Child, with Christ placing his hand on the staff of a banner with a red cross held by a member of a Venetian confraternity.[257] These associations are of limited relevance to this investigation because the Primo Maestro work does not depict *disciplinati* with or without red cross-emblazoned habits, and no depictions of Sienese *disciplinati* holding red cross banners have been located.

It may be that this is a funeral procession for a *confratello*. Confraternity members were responsible for the funerals and burials of fellow members. The Madonna above the group, in this hypothesis, would be pointing the way to heaven for the soul of

[257] The image was found in the same Christie's catalog in which the Burke illumination was included.

the departed. The steps in conjunction with Mary might refer to her role as the Stairway to Heaven, or salvation, for departed souls.

Despite the several indications that the illumination depicts a confraternity, it is not possible to conclude unequivocally that this hypothesis is correct. The chief obstacle to this conclusion is the fact that the group is not portrayed as wearing similar clothing.[258] While flagellants wore highly distinctive hooded robes, even *laudesi* members wore uniform robes to designate their affiliation. Moreover, several other contenders for identification exist and must be considered before reaching a conclusion.

Pilgrims, Templars and Crusaders

As discussed in an earlier chapter, the presence of pilgrims in 13th century Siena was constant and salient. They passed through the length of the city, going north and south. They required health care, food, and shelter, and stayed in Siena's *alberghi* and *ospedali*. The *biccherna* of 1288 lists 90 *alberghi* in the city. The pilgrims' route took them past the major architectural monuments and through the neighborhoods of the *contrade*. Including a depiction of a group of pilgrims would not have been unusual for a Sienese artist with an interest in narrative realism, as Primo Maestro was.

While the figures here do not resemble pilgrims because their clothing is too fine, it may be that this group is just setting out on a journey. There is also evidence that Tuscan cities dedicated funds for the re-outfitting of pilgrims as they passed through.

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[258] Both Scott and Labriola from the very outset of viewing a photo of the illumination reached this conclusion. Their views are valuable because of their extensive knowledge of Siena and Tuscan history and its artwork.

Although they do not have the shells so often used to designate pilgrims (and found on the pilgrims in the Pellegrinaio frescoes of the Ospedale), the shell motif was used only for those who had been to Santiago de Compostela.

One of the chief pieces of evidence for this interpretation is that the Madonna in the illumination seems to be indicating some sort of direction to the group below. She can be construed as pointing the way the pilgrims should proceed, toward Rome, Jerusalem, or northwards. She can be construed as an active participant in the narrative, whether the human or spiritual embodiment of a guide.

Several churches that served pilgrims continue to exist along the Via Francigena in Siena. San Pietro alla Magione (Figure 6-2) is located near the Porta Camollia at the north end of the city, on the former Via Francigena. Entrance to the church is gained now through a tall door of Gothic style, but traces of two matching portals, frequently found in pilgrimage churches, are visible. Further along is another originally Romanesque church, Sant'Andrea (Figure 6-6). The church door bears a sign today stating that it is the site of the Diocese Offices of the Pellegrini of Siena.

Of particular interest is that San Pietro alla Magione was originally a Templar house or preceptory. As discussed above, the Order of Templars was founded in 1119 to protect pilgrims on their journeys to the Holy Land. By the Duecento they had sites in Grosseto, Florence, Arezzo as well as Siena [259] and may have had as many as "7,000 knights, sergeants and serving brothers, and priests, while its associate members,

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[259] Barber, 2.

pensioners, officials, and subjects numbered many times that figure." [260] The Templari developed expertise in financial services because of the wealth they accumulated and thus inevitably interacted with Sienese merchants and bankers. A link between Templari and Sienese merchants is documented in 1305, when the Templars provided the societies of the Gallerani of Siena and the Frescobaldi of Florence with funds in the first decade of the 14th century.[261] Clearly this was a group with significant presence in Siena during this era.

Popes depended on Templar financial support and management skills: "Templar *cubicularii* can be seen administering Pope Alexander's revenues and arranging loans from 1163 onwards....Equally, such men were prominent at the thirteenth century papal court and throughout the papal states, especially helping to finance the pro-papal Guelphs in the long struggle with imperial forces in central Italy."[262] Involvement with the Sienese merchants and bankers most probably did not begin, therefore, until after the Guelph victory in 1269.

The figures in the Primo Maestro work thus may not be pilgrims, but rather their protectors—the Templari and their associates. Suggestive of this interpretation is the fact that the Templari used the red cross on their banners, tunics, shields, and armor and horse

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[260] Ibid., 1.

[261] *Calendar of the Close Rolls of Edward I, Vol. V. 1302-07,* 172-3, 343, as reported in Barber, 273.

[262] Barber, 276.

trappings. The red cross on the wall of San Pietro alla Magione may refer to its Templar roots (Figure 6-2).)

Because the Templari venerated the Madonna, her inclusion in a depiction of Templari is not unusual. Early in its history, the Templar Order had developed a cult of the Virgin derived from its original connection with the Order of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and the Benedictine Rule with its Marian orientation governed Templar behavior.[263] Moreover,

> a number of beliefs arose which linked Mary with the Temple: for example, it was said that the Annunciation had taken place in the Temple of the Lord (The Dome of the Rock) and a stone on which Mary rested was outside the Templar fortress of Castle Pilgrim. There were Lady chapels in many of the Templar churches and number of their houses...were dedicated to Mary. [264]

Frescoes depicting the Madonna and Child were often painted in Templar churches. The church of San Bevignate at Perugia, one of the more important Italian Templar centers, features a prominent fresco of the Virgin and Child enthroned on the main wall of the apse.[265].

Although the figures in the Primo Maestro manuscript illumination are not wearing typical Templari armor or tunics, they might be a group of Templari supporters, perhaps prominent Sienese citizens. The elaborate network required to support one Templar knight might have included a group such as this who considered themselves

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[263] Piers Paul Read, *The Templars* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1999), 136.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Barber, 203-204.

affiliated with the Order and its banner. This might enable explanation of the inclusion of a woman in the group; women were never otherwise Templari.

It is also possible to identify this group as affiliated in some more general way with the Crusades but not Templar knights. While they are not wearing Crusader military garb, the red cross is commonly associated with Crusaders. The Crusades began at the end of the 11th century; the last, eighth, Crusade was in 1270. Crusaders would have used the routes through Siena much as did pilgrims and Templari, en route to embarkation ports. Crusaders are present in Sienese art: Pietro Lorenzetti depicted a Madonna and Child blessing a Crusader in a fresco in San Domenico. In fact, the Virgin was considered the patron saint of the Crusades.

St. George, an early Christian knight (dated to the 5th century) whose mythical deeds assumed currency in the 13th century when they were published in the Golden Legend, became linked improbably with the Crusades and also with a red cross banner. (See Gentile da Fabriano's *Quaratesi Polyptych* of 1425 for a depiction of St. George and the red cross on a banner and shield.)

> William of Malmesbury tells us that Saints George and Demetrius, "the martyr knights", were seen assisting the Franks at the battle of Antioch, 1098 (Gesta Regum, II, 420). It is conjectured, but not proved, that the "arms of St. George " (argent, a cross, gules) were introduced about the time of Richard Coeur de Lion....The large red St. George's cross on a white ground remains still the "white ensign" of the British Navy and it is also one of the elements which go to make up the Union Jack. [266]

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[266] Herbert Thurston, "St. George," *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume VI* (The Robert Appleton Company, 1909. Online Edition Copyright 2003), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06453a.htm

St. George assumed somewhat mysterious importance for the Sienese at the Battle of Montaperti.

> The text of the Montalcino submission to Siena, drawn up four days after the battle [of Montaperti], on 8 September .... is described as having been made 'in honour and reverence of almighty God and the blessed Mary ever Virgin, who is defender and governor of this city, and of the blessed George....'[267]

Webb rightly asks:

> What was St. George doing at Montaperti, and why is he invoked in the document recording the submission of Montalcino four days later?....It is stated in the statute of 1262 that George, the 'knight of knights' [miles militum] has been elected the principal standard-bearer of the commune and its foremost defender; he is to be invoked in all its affairs; through his prayers and merits God has granted the Sienese victory against the Florentines and all their allies. It might indeed be said that the credit for the victory as such is given to him. The statute goes on to provide for official contributions to the celebration of his feast-day, and for assistance to the rebuilding of the church of San Giorgio....[which]was to be built on the site of the victory....George was still commemorated in the 1274 statute, despite the reversal of Ghibelline fortunes, but he subsequently disappeared. [268]

The group in the Primo Maestro painting may have some particular affiliative connection with St. George. Or they may simply be celebrating his feast day or otherwise commemorating him for his role in the Montaperti victory.

The presence of the stairway does not rule out an interpretation in favor of pilgrims, Templars, or Crusaders. Any of these groups might be portrayed as mounting

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[267] Webb, 259.

[268] Ibid., 265-67.

steps in the city or taking part in a procession in the Duomo or a mendicant church, seeking Mary's guidance and blessing on their routes.

The *Popolo*

It is easy to read too much into the clue of the banner, assuming it signifies a specific affiliative group. It may not be the standard of any group in particular, but rather simply a religious emblem carried by worshippers in a Christian procession. "Generically, a red cross can just symbolize Salvation. Banners symbolize Christian triumph, and a banner with a red cross generically symbolizes Christ's victory over death...known as a 'banner of victory' or the "Banner of the Resurrection." Processing with a banner symbolizes marching in victory."[269] Various Christian saints have been depicted with a red cross, on a banner on white ground or by itself. The Beccafumi St. Catherine of Siena in the Pinacoteca is such an image. It does not appear, however, that the red cross became a symbol of her confraternity.

The red cross has also been used as a symbol of a town and its people. The *popolo* of Florence was represented by a red cross, and that city's patron saint through the 13th century, Santa Reparata, is often depicted with a banner with a red cross. In Florence's Duomo, a stained glass window also contains a figure of a lamb holding a banner with the red cross, perhaps a double reference to Christ's victory and to the *popolo* of Florence (Figure 7-6). Embossed on the ceiling of the loggia of the Bargello are red crosses. It is possible the gradual illuminated by Primo Maestro may have been

[269] Personal conversation with Reverend Christopher Creed, November 1, 2004.

destined for a church in Florence and thus the depiction of Florentine citizens carrying their city banner. Non-Sienese commissions were not unknown to him; he had already worked in Arezzo.

A slim possibility exists that the banner references Siena's *popolo*. The city of Siena's coat of arms today contains the arms of its three Terzi, and the image used by the Terzo of the Citta is a white cross on a red ground. It is possible that over the years the colors of these features were reversed and that in the 13th century the Citta was represented by the red cross. (No *contrada* currently uses the red cross on its banner.) While the banner may not symbolize the *popolo* as a governmental body, it is possible that the figures depicted are from the *popolo* constituent classes. The *popolo* ruled Siena from about 1230 through 1260 in the form of the magistracy of the Twenty-four, and its constituent guilds and the middle class obviously continued to exist in the century. Martines[270] has suggested that the governing reign of the popolo was extremely important in the history of Siena, perhaps thereby warranting their inclusion in a painting such as this.

The Primo Maestro may not have been intending to depict any particular group, but simply ordinary citizens "organized into a procession, on the basis of either guild membership or neighbourhood, which traversed the city along a prescribed route." [271] As discussed in an earlier chapter, the citizens of Siena were required legally to process and

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[270] Martines, 58-9. See Note #152, in Chapter 6.

[271] Webb, 18.

make an offering at the shrine of the patron saint on that saint's major feast-day. The offerings, often candles as depicted here, were construed as gratitude to the patron saints for their concern for the city or for performing a miracle, or as pleas for assistance. Guilds, which functioned much like confraternities, often had patron saints and celebrated them accordingly. Even without the legal requirement, Sienese citizens might regularly visit the shrine of a saint with an offering as gratitude for some action such as healing of the sick, even without an organized procession. While the legal requirement for offering and processions has been stressed here, there is considerable evidence that the citizenry enjoyed the festive nature of the processions.[272] They were very popular and thus served the function of civic stability, while at the same time being legitimated by theology.

Cittadini

After considering the several possible identities of the figures in the Burke illumination, the strongest hypothesis is that they are a group of notable citizens (*cittadini*), perhaps with a particular connection to the Ospedale. All other hypotheses have weaknesses and fail to adequately account for all the narrative elements. The banner, a potentially useful clue, appears to be a generalized religious symbol that might have been carried by any group of worshippers.

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[272] Ronald F. E. Weissman, "Cults and Contexts: In Search of the Renaissance Confraternity," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and The Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler, 201-220 (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1991), 210.

In the Siena of the second half of the 13th century, secular and religious life were deeply interwoven. As we have seen, the city was ruled by a collection of wealthy businessmen who also held positions in the church hierarchy. (Religious authorities were forced to share power with secular bodies as early as the first decades of the 12th century.) As discussed above, the Duomo *corali*, on which Primo Maestro worked, were commissioned "in connection with the activity of well-to-do, ambitious figures in the Chapter of Canons and in the Bishop's see," including members of the Malavolti family who had occupied the post of Bishop of Siena and other important canonical posts since the 1270s.[273] Primo Maestro was thus conversant with the close connection between the church and Siena's ruling families and might have been moved to include important *cittadini* in a religious painting such as this.

Other factors point to the identification of the group as prominent Sienese citizens. Of particular relevance is evidence from another illumination attributed to the Primo Maestro: the *Madonna and Child with Two Worshippers* in Philadelphia (Figure 5-6). That work shows interesting similarities to the Burke illumination, both in its compositional aspects and in the fact that it includes lay worshippers: the Madonna and Child are depicted above the crossbar of the letter A, and two lay worshippers of smaller scale are below. Intriguingly, both this illumination and the Burke are hypothesized to come from the same gradual.

This compositional scheme, with human figures of smaller scale kneeling at the foot of a painting or sculpture below a religious image or scene, is similar to that found in

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[273] Labriola, 30.

many later frescoes and altarpieces as a means of including and honoring the donors or commissioners of the art. Given that pictorial innovation in miniature illumination often preceded that of larger scale works, it seems possible that Primo Maestro might have employed that device here to depict notables. In other words, the two figures in the Philadelphia illumination may be intended to represent donors or at least prominent citizens, worshipping at an altar below the altarpiece. However, Maginnis notes that images of donors are rare in Sienese art and suspects that this tendency is intentional rather than the result of chance loss; he ascribes it to the "corporate mentality, of Sienese society, in which individual display was, if not discouraged, surely not encouraged. Even among surviving private devotional works, donor images are scarce."[274] If so, it is more likely that the figures are simply notable citizens.

The clothing worn by the first two elderly men in the procession in the Burke miniature is almost identical to that worn by the Philadelphia figures--the garb of Sienese citizens of substance in that era. They do not wear the tunics and leggings of tradespeople or laborers. The white bonnets that tie under the chin and the simple full length gowns with round high necklines are found in the *Allegory of Justice* fresco by Ambrogio in the Sala dei Nove. Although it was painted in the 14th century, Ambrogio's fresco has been hypothesized to depict Siena in the mid-13th century and the 24 figures in procession to represent members of the Magistracy of the 24, in other words, the political

[274] Maginnis, *World of the Early Sienese Painter*, 148.

elite of the era[275]. Additionally, the 15th century fresco in the Pellegrinaio by Priamo della Quercia of the *Beato Agostino Novello giving Robes to the Rector of the Hospital* shows figures wearing similar clothing; the depicted scene took place in the last quarter of the 13th century.

While the figures in the Burke illumination may simply be citizens of high status, it is also possible that they are male and female members of the semi-religious order (oblates) that supported the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala and perhaps other persons associated with that order. (See Chapter 6 for further discussion of this group.) A desire to honor the "charitable role played by laymen in the Hospital" prompted the decoration of the Pellegrinaio 150 years later,[276] and such motivation may well have existed during the Duecento also. It is known that the rector and oblates of the Ospedale came from the city's elite and hence would appear in costume such as that depicted here. Moreover, the impression of some sort of formal affiliation of all five figures is strong, and while it was not possible to conclude with certainty they were members of a confraternity, it is possible that they are affiliated through the Ospedale brotherhood, a variant of a confraternity.

Support for this hypothesis comes from further examination of costume. Clothing of the sort worn by the lead two figures is also found in the Ospedale's Pellegrinaio

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[275] Bowsky, 289.

[276] Alessandro Orlandini, *Foundlings and Pilgrims: Frescoes in the Sala del Pellegrinaio of the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena* (Siena: Nuova Immagine Editrice, 2002), 16.

frescoes by Domenico da Bartolo and Vecchieta and in the *Madonna of Mercy* of c. 1444 by Domenico elsewhere in the Ospedale. While the figures and architecture in these frescoes represent a creative mélange of time periods[277], the garb of depicted oblates appears similar to that of the figures in the two Primo Maestro illuminations. The exact costume of the rector and oblates was codified in 1305-09 by the Beato Agostino Novello, formalizing what had been merely customary before then.[278] Presumably the authority of the Beato was such that his strictures were followed into the 15th century, and thus the oblates of these frescoes wear uniforms similar to those of the 13th century. However, the oblates in the Ospedale frescoes wear black gowns, unlike the colorful garb in the Burke illumination.

The figure at the end of the procession may be female and, if so, given her garb, she may be a female oblate, or *sorella*, essentially a nurse of the Ospedale[279]. The red cape and simple white drape of her headdress suggest this occupation. If she is a nurse, the headdress may derive from the quasi-religious status of the Ospedale *sorelle*, for it is similar to the veil of the Virgin in the *Bordone Madonna*, the *San Domenico Madonna* and the *San Bernardino Madonna*. Judging from the Ambrogio frescoes of the Sala dei Novi, women in the 13th century without affiliation with a *consorella* wore open necked gowns and no head veils.

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[277] Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena,* 194.

[278] Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 155.

[279] Personal conversation, Susan Scott, 2004.

The two figures in front of the hypothesized nurse appear to be young men; their hair is a rich brown, unlike the gray of the two leading figures. The gown of the second figure from the left resembles that of the two figures at the front of the procession. But because he does not wear the white bonnet as they do, it is possible he is quite young, not yet belonging to the ranks of *cittadini* or oblates. The middle figure is noteworthy, for he appears without hat and in the red gown typically required of novices of the Ospedale order. A 15th century *biccherna* cover shows the Ospedale rector initiating a new red-gowned oblato into the order of S.M. della Scala (Figure 7-7).

Oblates who chose to live within S.M. della Scala in the 13th and 14th centuries were prohibited from marrying[280], but oblates were not required to live on premises and could maintain families. The mixture of ages and gender here may suggest that the miniature depicts the rector of the Ospedale with members of his family. It is likely that in any procession the privilege of carrying a banner was given to the most senior member of each particular group, hence the possibility that the figure holding the banner here is the rector himself. (The medical reference of the red cross symbol may date to this era.) A tangential relationship with the Crusades is possible; perhaps the rector or leader of the procession participated in the Crusades under the red cross banner. Rectors who served the Ospedale during the period that this manuscript might have been painted are Ranieri di Caccianeve, who initiated the remodeling of the Santissima Annunziata church in

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[280] Enrico Toti, *Santa Maria della Scala* (Siena: Protagon Editori Toscani, 2003), 42.

1257, Orlandi de Chiusure, for whom the Gothic Palazzo del Rettore was built in 1290 (Figure 7-8), Cacciaconte di Berengario and Ristoro di Giunta Menghi.

Further evidence for the connection of the Burke group (whether the rector, his family, or other oblates) to the Ospedale is the presence of the stairway in conjunction with the image of the Virgin.[281] The Ospedale's full name, of course, is the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala. The name derives from the location of the Ospedale near the Duomo with its steps leading to the church doors: "Hospitalis ante gradus Sancte Marie was first chosen, and finally the name Hospitalis Sancte Marie della Scala was settled on."[282] It is plausible that the *scala* referred also to the great number of stairs located throughout the Ospedale complex due to its location on a very steep hill.

If the figures are indeed associated with the order of Ospedale oblates, much of the argument made earlier regarding an Ospedale confraternity can be applied here. That is, the painting may be conveying the narrative of the group's procession up one of the many stairways of the Ospedale complex, on a route that will lead them past a possible image or altarpiece of the Madonna and Child in the church of Santissima Annunziata above. Or the Madonna and Child may be construed as symbolically blessing their progress and indicating the way forward. The stairs too may be viewed symbolically, as a referent, probably commonly recognized at that time, to the affiliation of this group

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[281] This conclusion was given further support by a personal communication from Ada Labriola. She cites her Kunsthistorisches colleague, Monica Butzek, who is preparing a book on the Duomo of Siena, who believes the most probable destination for this folio could be the church affiliated with the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala because of the emphasis on the stairs. (Conversation, December 1, 2004).

[282] Orlandini, 26.

with the Ospedale. The stairs have proved their utility as a symbol of the Ospedale; in the form of a ladder they appear in the official coat of arms of the Ospedale.

Because the identity of the lay individuals below the Madonna and Child cannot be definitively known, the meaning of this work will remain somewhat obscure. Primo Maestro may simply have intended the viewer to perceive the moral lesson implicit in depicting lay citizens engaged in an act of piety. It can be argued that the figures simply represent a group of high-placed or wealthy Sienese *cittadini* without particular affiliation or perhaps some sort of unknown affiliation with St. George because of the red cross. Although some key evidence derives from costumes painted at later dates (the Pellegrinaio and Sala dei Novi frescoes and the *biccherna* cover), the preponderance of clues suggests a conclusion that Primo Maestro has depicted a group linked to the oblates or rector of the Ospedale. In any event, Primo Maestro seems intent here on conveying a narrative centered on a procession, presumably in worship of the Virgin and entirely appropriate to Siena's historic role as *Civitas Virginis.*

CHAPTER 8

THE COMMISSIONING OF THE GRADUAL

One final aspect of the Burke illumination merits consideration. We know the painting was cut from what would have been a large choirbook with other illustrations, and it has been hypothesized that the eight pages in the Cini, the Philadelphia, and the Burke collections constitute perhaps the entire body of illuminations from a single gradual. But who or what agency might have commissioned the execution of this gradual?

Very little documentation regarding artistic commissions in Siena survives from this era. The history of patronage of the three main institutions, the commune, the Duomo, and the Ospedale, is sketchy, and "we know even less about images created for Siena's other charitable institutions, its confraternities, parish churches, and convents."[283] The most comprehensive source of information about payments for works of art is the *Biccherna* records. But volumes are missing, and payments were often made to the director of work on a project, the *operaio*, rather than to an artist directly.[284] Linking a specific project or artist with an identifiable commissioner is thus extremely difficult. While private patrons may have commissioned more than existing documentation and

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[283] Maginnis, *World of Early Sienese Painter*, 120.

[284] Ibid.

paintings suggest, "historical reasons and evidence suggest that private individuals did not play an important role in Sienese patronage."[285] These problems seem to be exacerbated in the case of manuscripts.

Clues as to the nature of a commission may lie in the work of art itself, however, because sometimes the patrons of a work of art are depicted. While this happens more often in monumental art and there is no established tradition for such depiction in miniatures, it was presumably not proscribed, and it is possible that the group in the lower register of the Burke illumination represents the patrons or commissioners of the gradual.

Given that depiction of laity of any sort was rare in surviving miniatures of this era, an image of one or more lay commissioners would certainly not have been common. However, as discussed in an earlier chapter, Primo Maestro does not appear averse to adding innovative touches to his work; the Madonna's hand and the inclusion of lay figures in two illuminations for the same gradual are indicative of an independence of spirit. He might have been inclined to break the mold still further by including images of people he was familiar with, perhaps indeed the people who commissioned the gradual.

Even granting that possibility, it is not a foregone conclusion that this particular illumination alone was selected to embody or honor the commissioners of the book, if at all. The Philadelphia illumination (Figure 5-6) might also depict the commissioners in the form of the two lay worshippers. Both illuminations are distinct from the others of the series in another way; they do not depict typical religious narratives or figures, as do

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[285] Ibid., 11.

the others in the series: *The Adoration of the Magi*, *The Resurrection,* the *Ascension*, *The Last Judgment*, *St. John the Baptist*, and *The Nativity*. The Burke and the Philadelphia paintings are secular historia; the narrative consists in what the laypersons are doing. The presence of the Madonna and Child supports the historia of the group below. Both illuminations are unusual enough in their time and place that they might include portraits of the commissioners.

The identification of the figures with a confraternity of either *laudesi* or *disciplinati* was rejected in an earlier chapter in favor of concluding that the group represented Sienese *cittadini*, perhaps those affiliated with the Ospedale's order of oblates. However, it is still possible that a confraternity might have commissioned the gradual, without being depicted in the illumination. It was not until the early 14th century that the tradition of representing confraternity members in art began. At that time, contracts began to be written that instructed an artist to include the confraternity's members, saint, or banner as a means of identifying the confraternity as the patron of the art.[286]

This hypothesis too was rejected. Labriola, based on her extensive experience with manuscripts of this era, reported that she did not know of any instance where a gradual was commissioned by a lay confraternity. The books most often commissioned by confraternities were collections of *laudi*, hymns sung in the vulgate, commissioned of

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[286] Ellen Schiferl, "Italian Confraternity Art Contracts: Group Consciousness and Corporate Patronage, 1400-1525," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and The Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler, 121-140 (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1991), 125.

course by *laudesi* confraternities.[287] Sebregondi noted that confraternities also commissioned books that documented and specified rules for their own ceremonies and rituals.[288] Maginnis notes that a 1325 inventory of the possessions of the Confraternity of Jesu Christo Crocefisso, attached to the Ospedale di SM della Scala lists an illuminated manuscript "identified as the 'libro di Collationi de' santi Padri." Another manuscript belonging to this confraternity dated 1333 with drawings for unfinished miniatures is in the Biblioteca Comunale. [289] The first is clearly not a gradual, while it is unclear what the latter unfinished manuscript might have been. As with private patrons, commissions by confraternities and guilds have not been found in Sienese archives.[290]

The gradual might have been made for the Duomo of Siena, in which case the commissioning body would have been the canons of the Church, just as were the 13th century Duomo choirbooks currently preserved in intact form in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Labriola hypothesized that those books were commissioned in the 1280's by figures with key positions in the Chapter of Canons and in the Bishop's see.[291] Given that five antiphoners were commissioned for that series, but only two graduals, it is possible

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[287] Labriola, personal conversation, May 17, 2004.

[288] Ludovica Sebregondi, "Religious Furnishings and Devotional Objects in Renaissance Florentine Confraternities," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and The Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler, 141-160 (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1991), 149.

[289] Maginnis, *World of Early Sienese Painter*, 151.

[290] Ibid., 12.

[291] Labriola, 30.

that the gradual from which the Burke page was cut was also commissioned about the same time or a little later to fill out the series. If made for this group of *corali*, the Burke illumination with its errors and erasures might have been either rejected and sent to a lesser church or not used and later removed from the Duomo. Even if this gradual had been commissioned by the canons of the Duomo, given that the figures in the Burke illumination are not in religious robes, we can assume this is not a portrait of the canons.

Because the Primo Maestro has been identified as working on a choirbook for the Duomo in Arezzo, we cannot rule out the possibility that this gradual was commissioned by a church outside Siena. The evident affinity of Primo Maestro's style with that of the Florentines suggests perhaps a potentially lengthy exposure to Florentine artists. Sienese artists, major and minor, are documented as having worked for patrons in Florence, Grosseto, San Gimignano, Perugia and elsewhere in the Duecento.[292]

The possibility that the clergy of Santissima Annunziata or the rectors of the Ospedale, in which that church was located, commissioned this gradual remains strong. Later evidence suggests that such commissioning by the Ospedale did take place: "We know that from c. 1340-45 the Hospital commissioned a series of liturgical books, illuminated by Lippo Vanni and other artists, which are still preserved."[293] The gradual would, in this scenario, have been used in Ss. Annunziata. The slighter lesser quality of this illumination when compared to Primo Maestro's work for the Duomo *corali* might reflect the lesser status of this church *vis a vis* the Duomo. We know that Ss. Annunziata

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[292] Maginnis, *World of Early Sienese Painter*, 152.

[293] Labriola, personal conversation, May 17, 2004.

went through considerable remodeling in subsequent centuries, remodeling of such magnitude that even the Ambrogio frescoes that were originally on the exterior wall of the church were destroyed. It is not unreasonable to assume that the liturgical apparatus of the 13th century church would have likewise been destroyed or dispersed. The current church appears to have very little art or liturgical equipment remaining (at least on display) from that era.

The administrators of the Ospedale were responsible for a number of smaller hospitals outside Siena as well as for many *grance* in the *contado* that provided agricultural supplies to the Ospedale. Because each of these had a chapel or church affiliated with it[294] and each would have needed a gradual and an antiphoner, the Burke gradual may have been commissioned by the Ospedale rectors for one of these lesser churches.

We know that the rectors and senior oblates of the Ospedale were generous. The enormous wealth accumulated by the Ospedale over the centuries was a result of gifts and bequests from its supporters. They often gave art, relics, and artifacts, not just land and money. Commissioning a gradual or an entire set of *corali* for the Ospedale church would perhaps not have been out of the ordinary, especially given the quasi-religious status of the Ospedale order. The "rectors...characteristically belonged to the city's lay political elite and their patronage of art in the hospital frequently reflected family

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[294] Maginnis, *World of Early Sienese Painter*, 148.

interests and those of close political associates."[295] Primo Maestro may indeed have been depicting the church's benefactors and the commissioners of the gradual when he painted the Burke miniature.

[295] Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena,* 20.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The Burke illumination afforded an opportunity to explore a wide swath of research questions and led to a comprehensive examination of the circumstances of its creation and its content. This paper examined the art historical context of late 13th century Siena—the historical and prevailing artistic currents as well as the artists whose work shaped and responded to those currents. Investigation of contemporary Sienese paintings and artists led to a probable attribution of the Burke illumination not to Dietisalvi di Speme as Christie's had hypothesized, but to an anonymous miniaturist best known for his work on the 13th century Duomo *corali*, the so-called Primo Maestro dei Corali del Duomo di Siena.

Because the content of the Burke illumination was unusual in several ways, it warranted intensive investigation. Research into the political, social and religious context of 13th century Siena yielded the conclusion that the artist had depicted not only a scene of Virgin veneration typical of its era, but also innovatively a possible portrait of a group of Sienese notables affiliated with the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala.

This artwork and the research it spawned thus enabled a rich characterization of the artist and his time. Primo Maestro lived during a period of extraordinary growth and change in Siena. Important developments in all realms occurred in the second half of the 13th century, and Primo Maestro's art engaged and embodied many of those developments.

About the time of Primo Maestro's birth in 1260, the victory at Montaperti and subsequent elevation of the Virgin were to leave a marked impact on the city. During the 1260s, major work on the Duomo was completed, Coppo painted the *Bordone Madonna*, the *San Bernardino Madonna* was painted, and the tradition of *biccherna* cover painting was becoming well-established. By 1285-90, when Primo Maestro was painting the Burke miniature and others possibly for the same gradual, economic and political stability were emerging. The Guelph class of wealthy merchants and bankers had surmounted the Ghibelline power of the *popolo*'s middle class and the old nobility to form a new governing system. The signory and the Mercanzia coalesced into the ruling oligarchic structure of the Nine in 1287. The historic battles with Florence over papal versus imperial ambitions and over allegiances among towns in the *contado* had been settled in 1269 at the battle of Colle di Val d'Elsa, and Siena was active and thriving economically in the Guelph league. Civic leaders held sway over much of the religious life of Siena, and new *corali* for the Duomo were being commissioned. The Palazzo Pubblico was in the early stages of construction, and Duccio had completed the *Rucellai Madonna* in Florence. The Ospedale continued accumulating wealth from its *contado* farms and played an important role in the city's power structure. Siena more than doubled in size in the second half of the Duecento, and the vitality of its urban environment, enhanced by its university, its guilds, and its wealthy, educated mercantile class, further seeded the ripe artistic soil.

The cult of the Virgin was in full flower, with multiple processions throughout the city during the year, and a proliferation of confraternities and other groups devoted to

forms of lay veneration of the Virgin. Although required by civic statute and religious tradition, processions were enjoyed by the citizenry and served the function of civil stability.

These developments in the art and religious and civic life of Siena can be traced in the oeuvre of Primo Maestro. While remaining rooted in the artistic traditions of iconic imagery and symbolism, he demonstrated a recognition of the impetus toward greater naturalism, realism, and narrative intent. His stylistic ventures in those directions, like those of other Duecento and Trecento Sienese artists, were used in veneration of the Virgin, Siena's patron saints, and, to a lesser degree, other holy figures.

In the Burke illumination, the veneration of the Virgin is readily apparent. The role of her image as iconic symbol is straightforward; her mere presence in the scene does her honor. But, using new artistic tools and conceptualizations, Primo Maestro has made a much more interesting and multi-layered statement here. Through the unusual positioning of her arm and a more volumetric rendering of her body, Primo Maestro has suggested the Virgin's physical presence and her role as a guide to the lay procession below. Even if not a bodily presence but rather an image on an altarpiece or other iconic medium, the Virgin retains a physical immediacy through her image that renders her a participant in the narrative action.

Further, by inserting laity into what otherwise could have been a traditional iconic miniature for the Introit, Primo Maestro is consciously linking the religious and the secular, the symbolic and the real. In two of the eight illuminations he painted for this gradual (assuming they are indeed part of a single manuscript), he has ventured into this

new domain of including depictions of laity. Selection as a painter of one or more illuminations for the Duomo *corali* of the 1280s was honor sufficient perhaps to give him the confidence to embark on this atypical iconography.

In this small painting Primo Maestro engages thus not only innovative art historical currents but also what was happening in the city around him. Through the joint governance of its institutions, through the blending of pleasure and duty in its processions, through groups such as guilds and confraternities that served civic as well as social functions, Siena itself was linking the religious and the secular, the symbolic and the real. Christian devotion and worship were removed from the rarified air and exclusive province of the clergy and brought it into the lives of ordinary citizens just as the Madonna and Child are present in the lives of the laypersons in Primo Maestro's illumination.

ILLUSTRATIONS

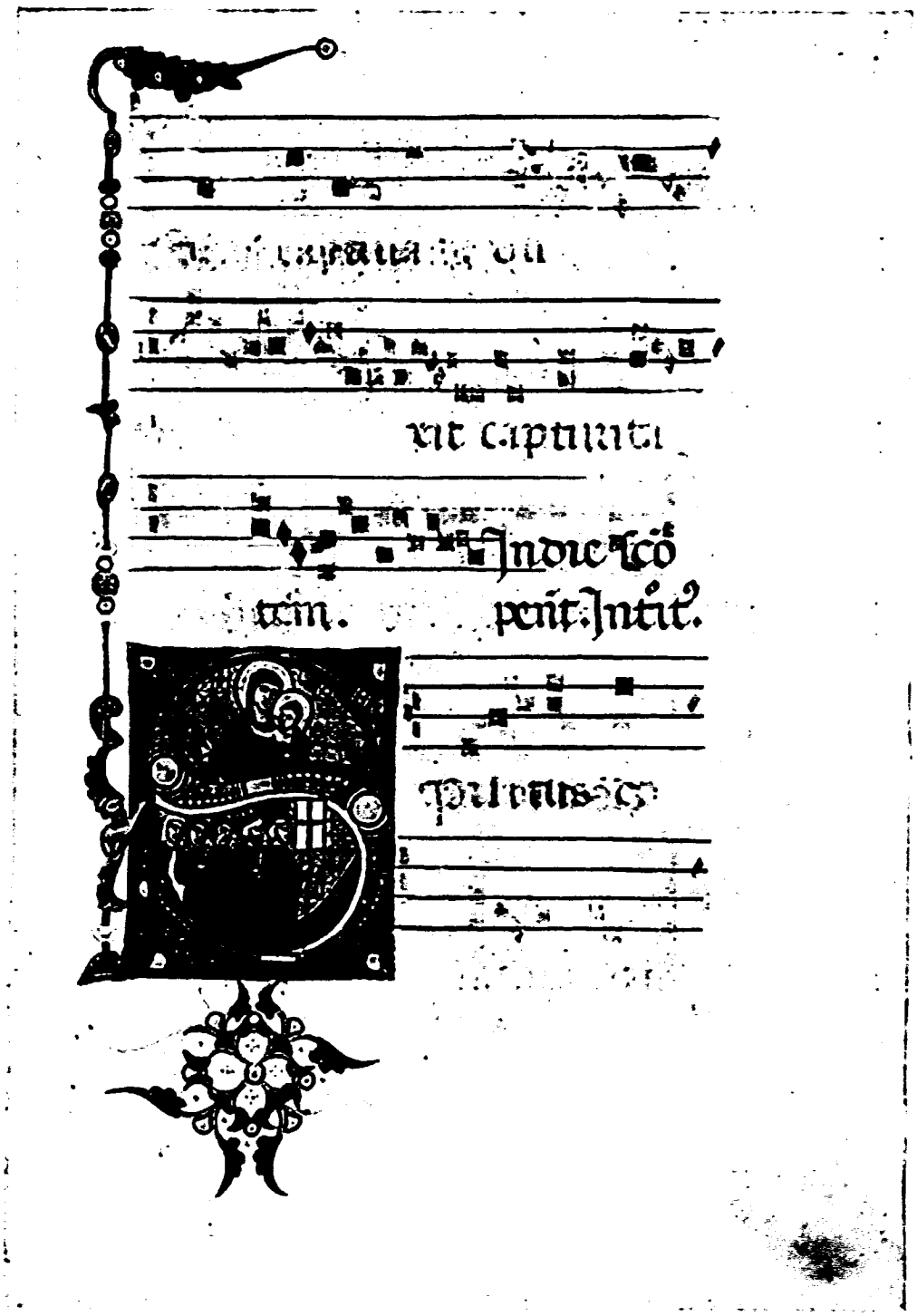

Figure 1-1. Primo Maestro dei Corali del Duomo, *Madonna and Child and Procession*, c. 1280-90. San Francisco, Burke Collection. Illuminated manuscript on vellum. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 2-1. Primo Maestro dei Corali del Duomo, *Madonna and Child and Procession*, c. 1280-90. Detail. San Francisco, Burke Collection. Illuminated manuscript on vellum. Reprinted by permission.

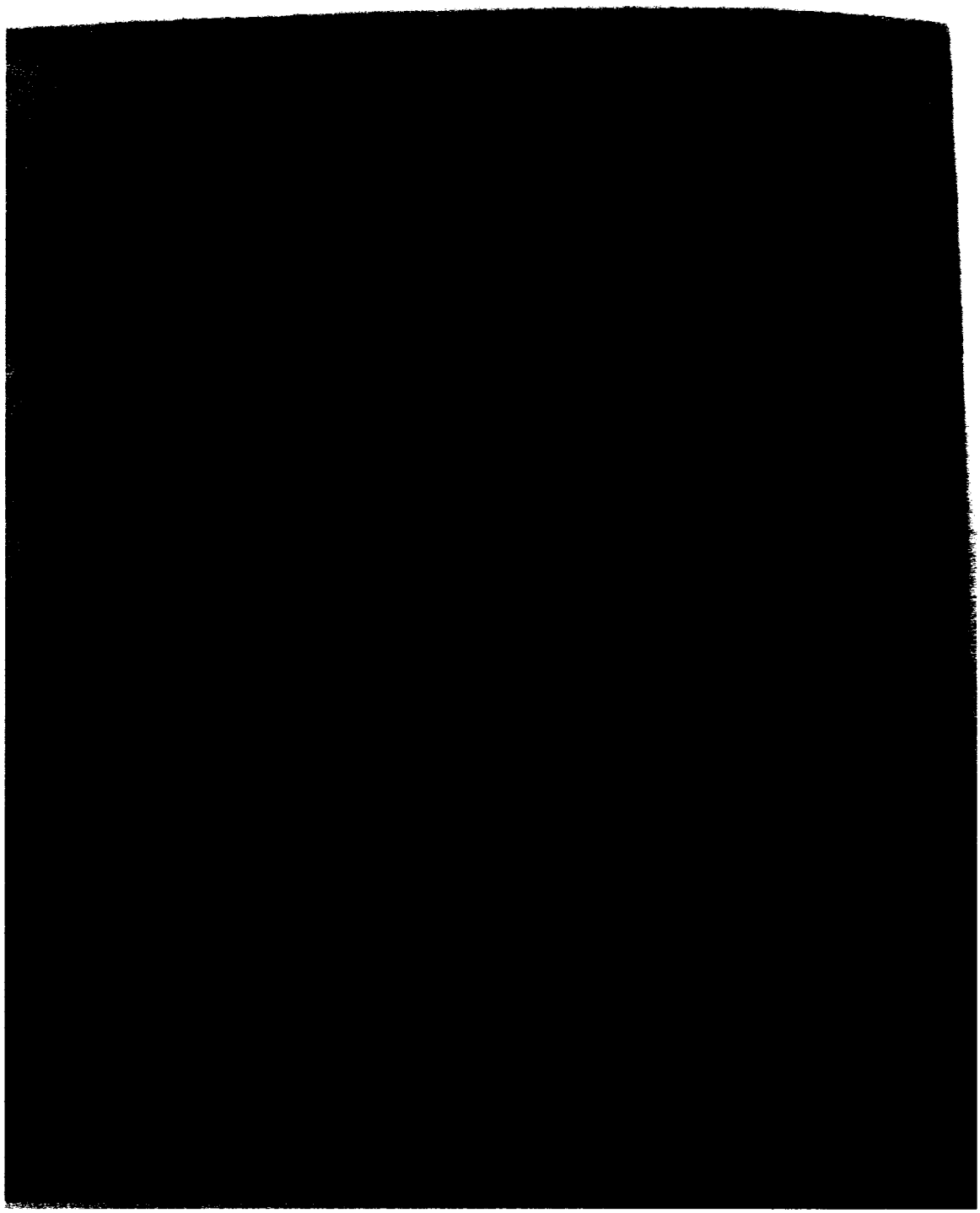

Figure 2-2. *Adoration of the Magi,* c. 1470. Location unknown. Pen and ink, draft of illuminated manuscript on vellum. Reprinted from Sandra Hindman, *Medieval and Renaissance Miniature Painting* (Akron, Ohio: Bruce Ferrini Rare Books, 1988), 40.

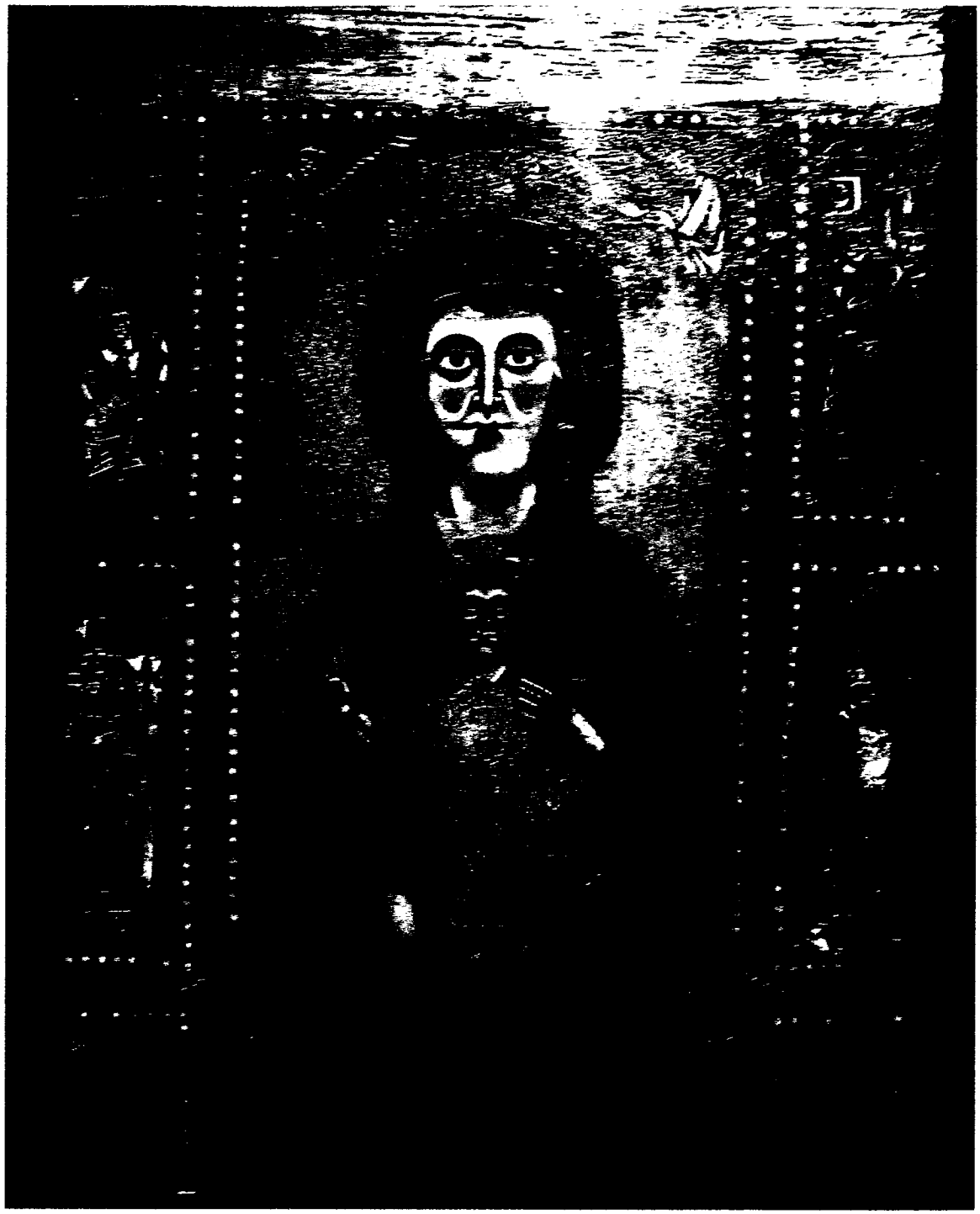

Figure 3-1. Master of Tressa, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1215. Siena, San Bernardino Oratory. Originally from the church of Sta. Maria a Tressa. Photo by author.

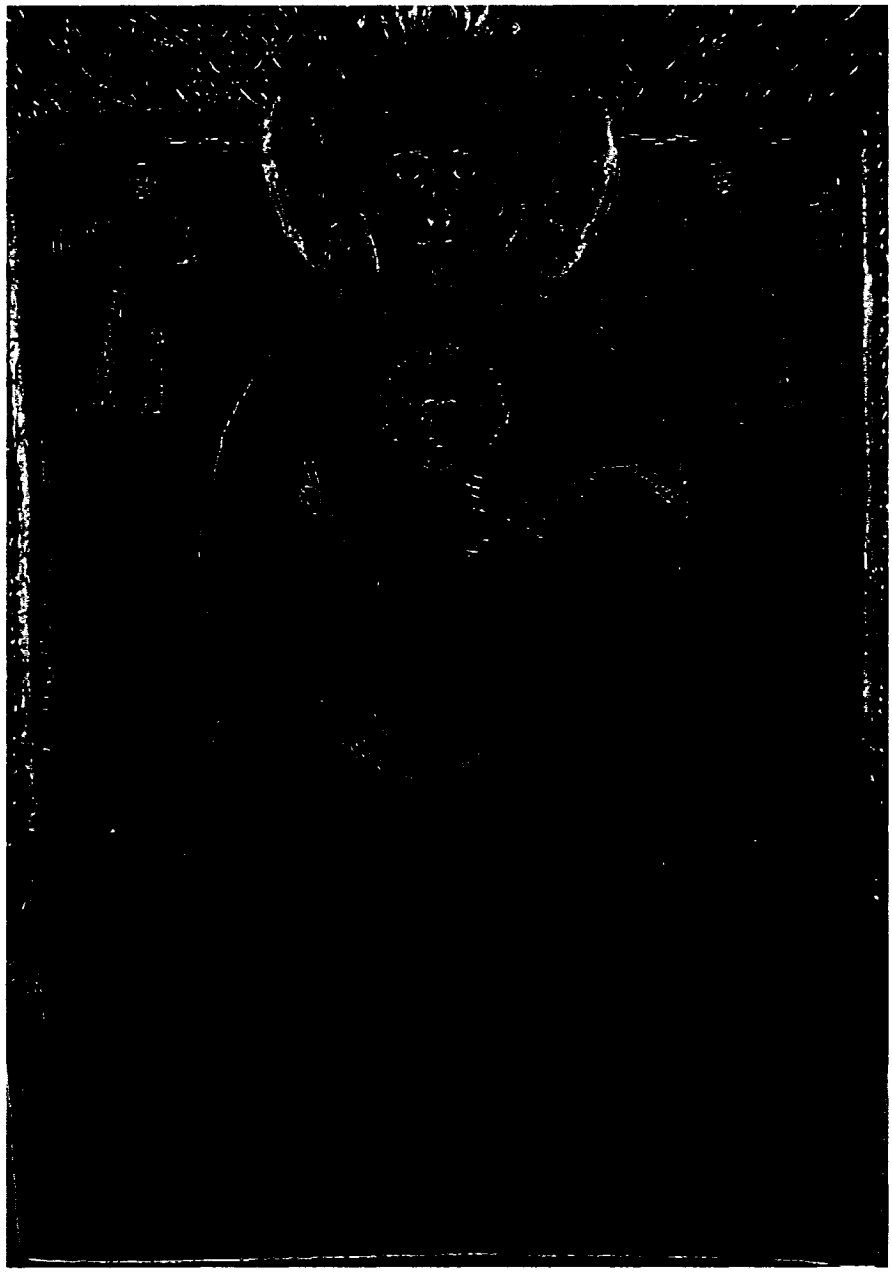

Figure 3-2. *Madonna degli Occhi Grossi,* c. 1215. Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted by permission.

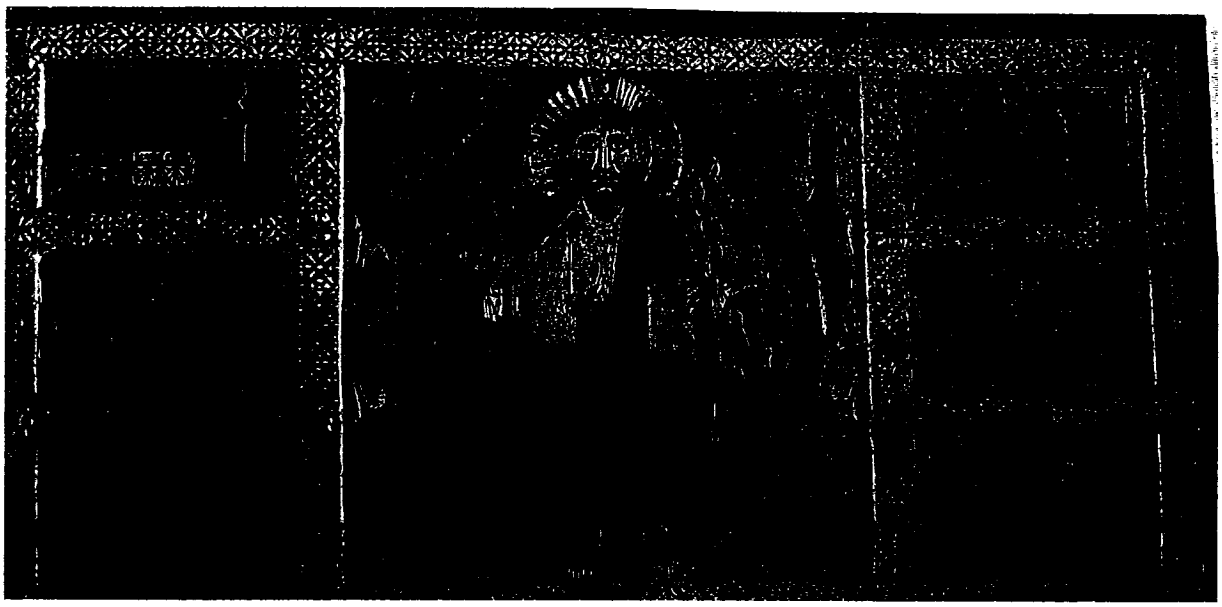

Figure 3-3. Attributed to Master of Tressa, *Majestas Domini,* c. 1215. Siena, Pinacoteca. Reprinted from Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 31.

Figure 3-4. Coppo da Marcovaldo, *Madonna del Bordone,* 1261. Siena, Santa Maria dei Servi. Photo by author.

Figure 3-5. Guido da Siena, *Dossal No. 7,* 1270s. Siena, Pinacoteca. Reprinted from Marco Torriti, *National Picture Gallery of Siena* (Genova: Sagep Editrice, 2003), 5.

Figure 3-6. Guido da Siena, *San Domenico Madonna*, 1270s. Siena, Chiesa San Domenico. Photo by author.

Figure 3-7. Dietisalvi di Speme, *Madonna del Voto*, c. 1267. Siena, Duomo. Photo by author.

Figure 3-8. Dietisalvi di Speme, *Pieta,* 1260s. Detail. Siena, Duomo Crypt. Reprinted from Roberto Guerrini, ed., *Sotto il duomo di Siena* (Siena: Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena Spa, 2003),

Figure 3-9. San Bernardino Master, *Madonna and Child*, 1262. Siena, Pinacoteca. Reprinted from Hayden B.J. Maginnis, "Everything in a Name? Or the Classification of Sienese Duecento Painting." In *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. Victor M. Schmidt, 471-486 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 476.

Figure 4-1. Unidentified artist (possibly Guido da Siena), *St. Dominic*, c.1240. Cambridge, MA, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Hervey E. Wetzel Bequest Fund, 1920.20. Photo by Photographic Services. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 4-2. Dietisalvi di Speme, *Ildebrandino Pagliaresi, Biccherna* cover of 1264, Siena, Archivio di Stato di Siena. Reprinted from Luciano Bellosi, "Per un contesto cimabuesco senese: a) Guido da Siena e il probabile Dietisalvi di Speme." *Prospettiva* 61 (January 199): 6-20, 12.

Figure 4-3. Dietisalvi di Speme, *Bacio di Giuda*, 1260s. Siena, Duomo Crypt. Reprinted from Roberto Guerrini, ed., *Sotto il duomo di Siena* (Siena: Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena Spa, 2003), 123.

Figure 5-1. Primo Maestro, Initial E, *Cristo Benedicente tra due angeli e gli Apostoli*, Austria, Private Collection. Reprinted from Ada Labriola, "La miniatura senese degli anni 1270-1330." In *La miniatura senese 1270-1420*, ed. Cristina de Benedictis, 11-103 (Milano: Soprintendenza al Patrimonio Storico Artistico e Demoetnoantropologico delle Province di Siena e Grosseto, 2002), 78.

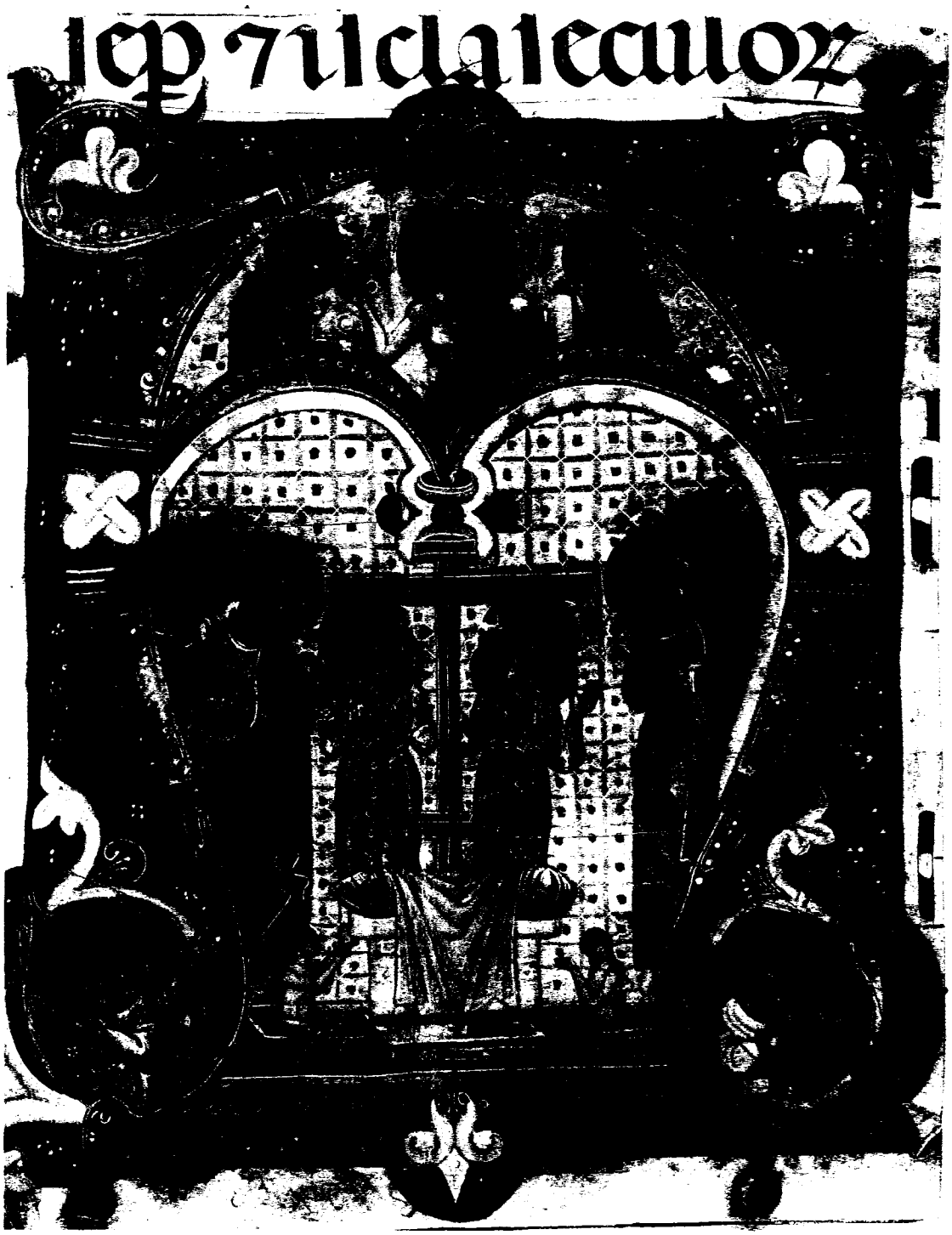

Figure 5-2. Primo Maestro, N 2021, Initial A, *Giudizio Finale*, c. 1280s. Venice, Cini Foundation. Reprinted by permission.

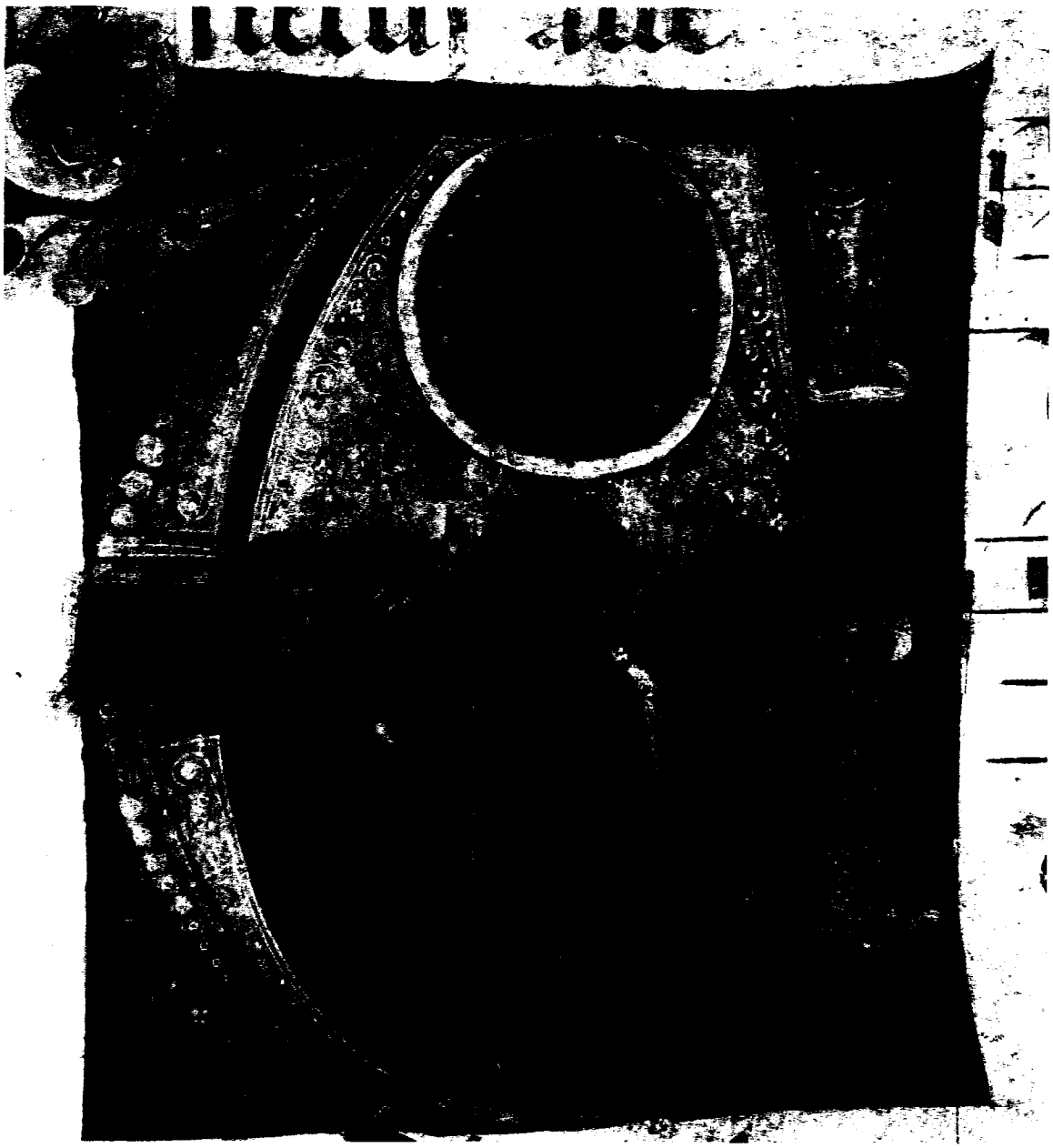

Figure 5-3. Primo Maestro, N 2022, Initial V, *Ascensione di Cristo*, c. 1280s. Venice, Cini Foundation. Reprinted by permission.

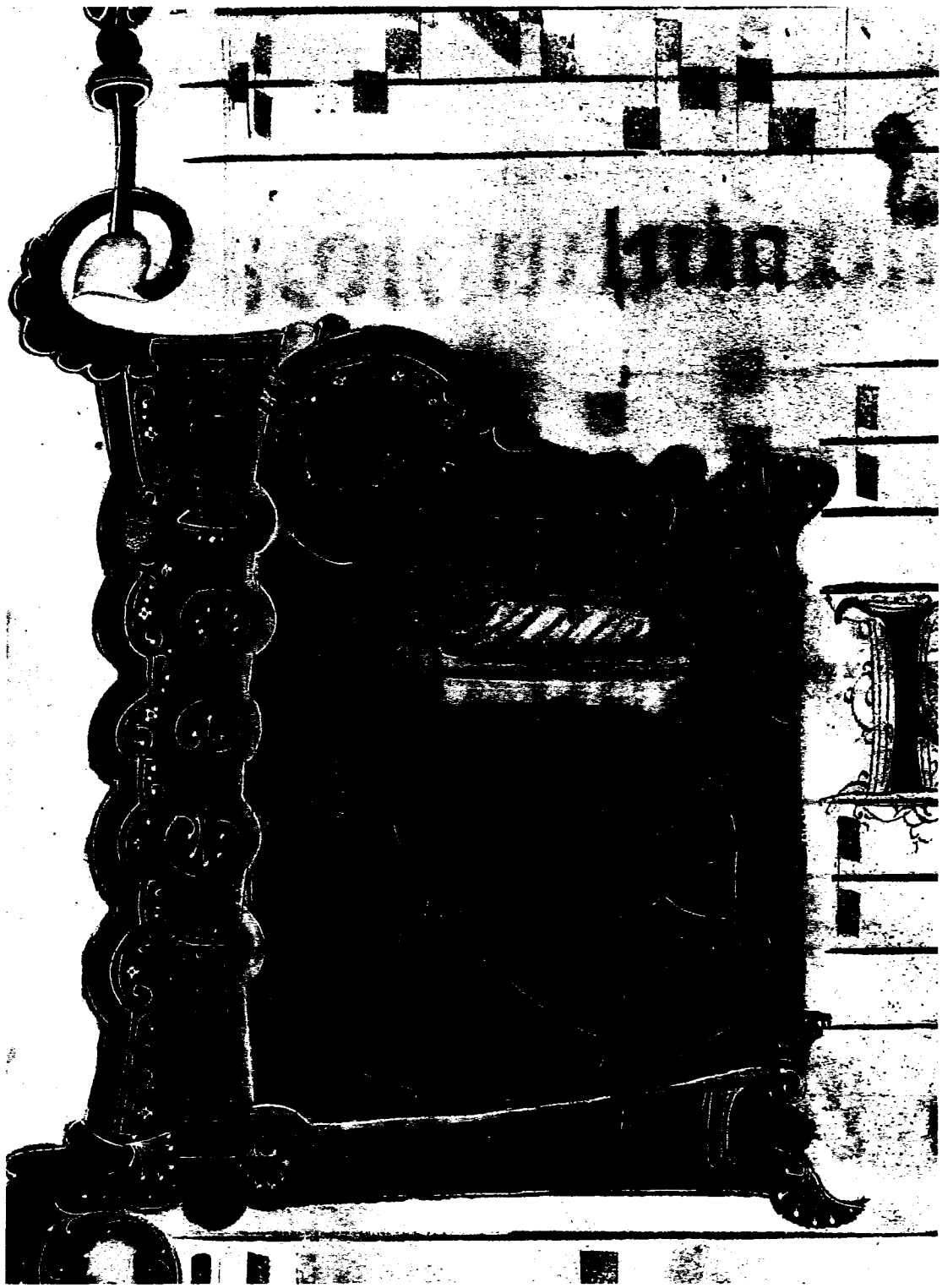

Figure 5-4. Primo Maestro, N 2023, Initial L, *Natività di Cristo*, c. 1280s. Venice, Cini Foundation. Reprinted by permission.

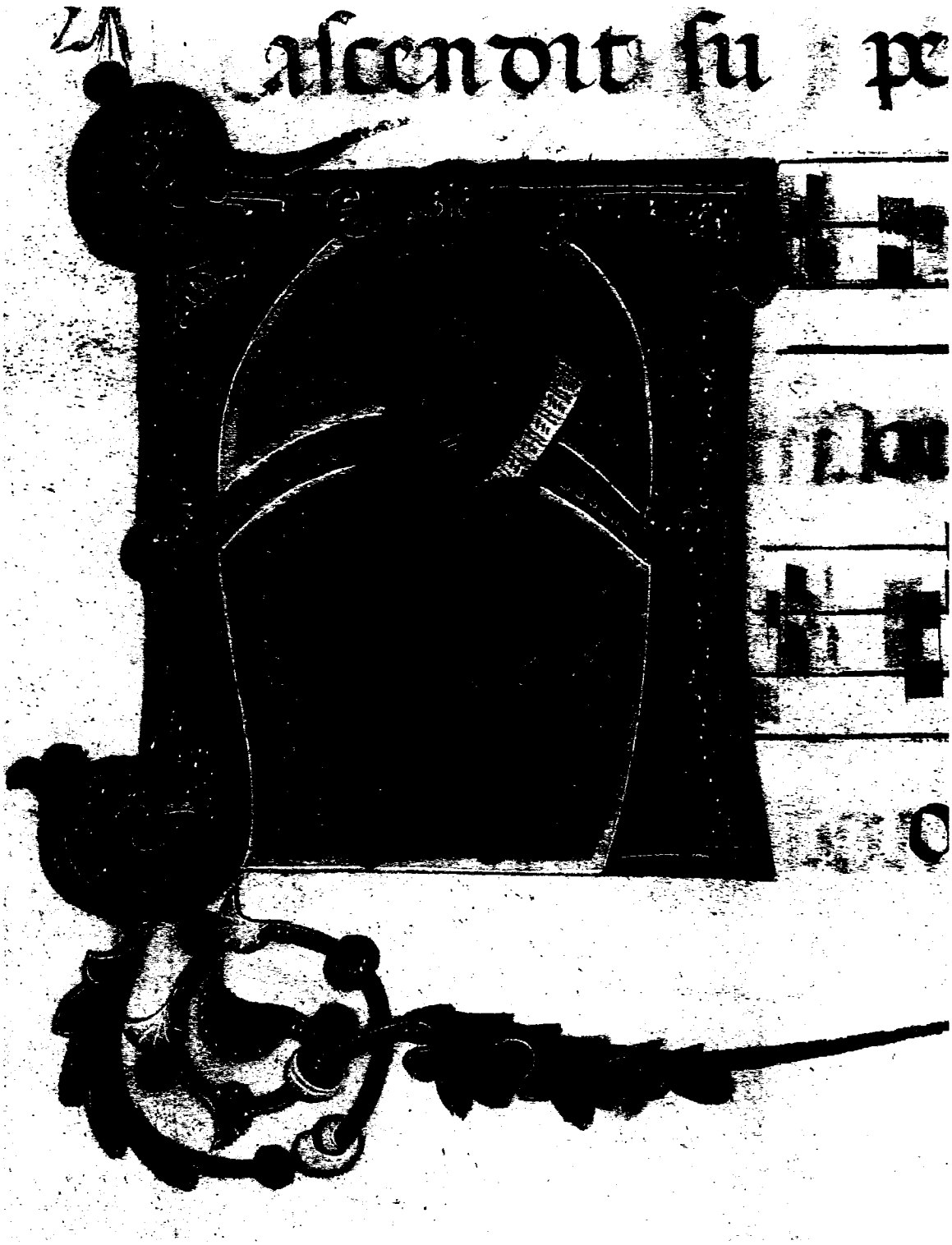

Figure 5-5. Primo Maestro, N 2156, Initial A, *San Giovanni Battista*, c. 1280s. Venice, Cini Foundation. Reprinted by permission.

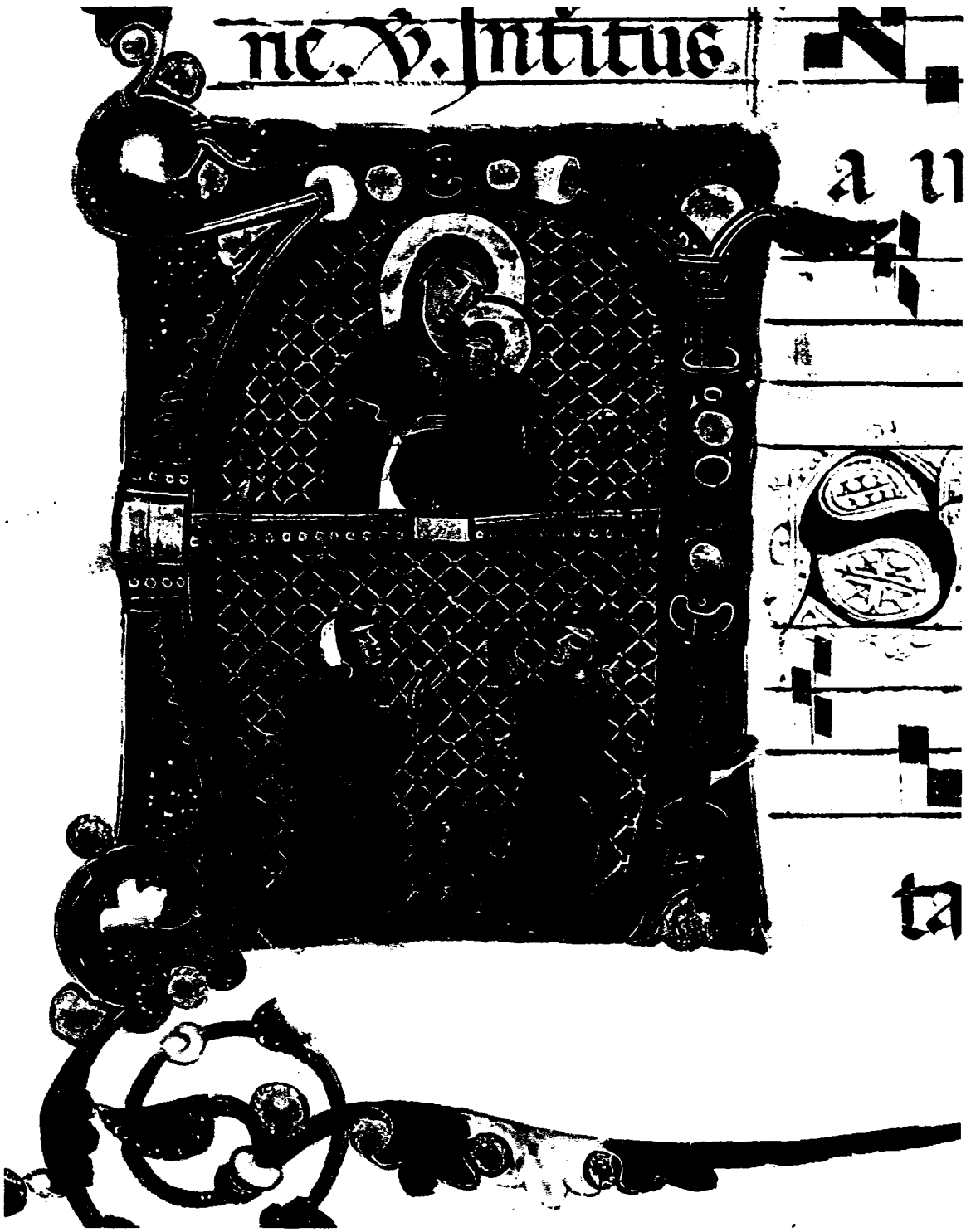

Figure 5-6. Primo Maestro, Initial A, *Madonna and Child and Two Worshippers*, 1280-90, (LewisEM696). Philadelphia, Free Library, Rare Book Department. Reprinted by permission.

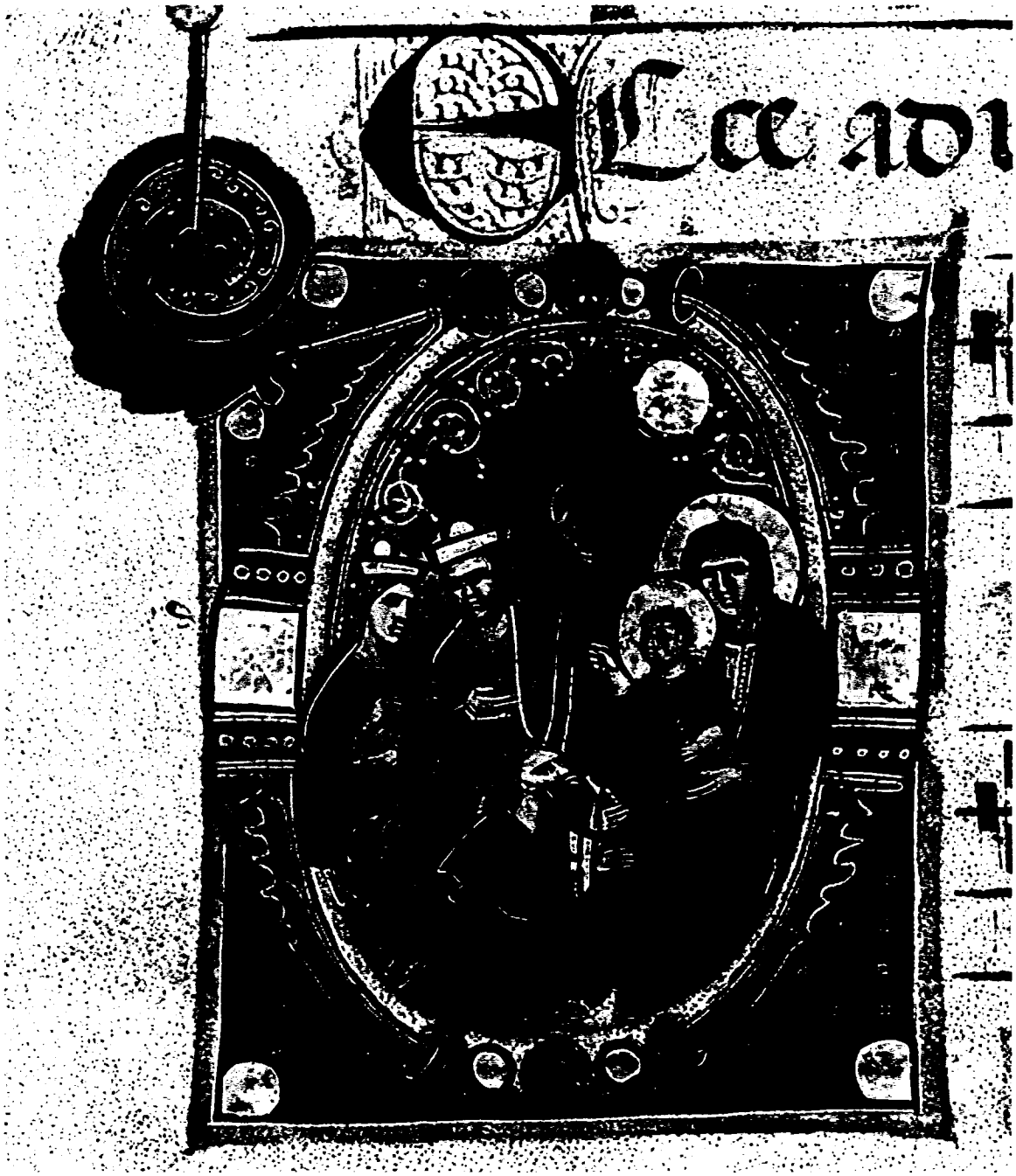

Figure 5-7. Primo Maestro, Initial D, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1280-90 (LewisEM697). Philadelphia, Free Library, Rare Book Department. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 5-8. Primo Maestro, Initial R, *Resurrection and Three Marys at the Sepulchre*, 1280-90. San Francisco, Burke Collection. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 5-9. Primo Maestro, Initial R, *Resurrezione di Cristo e le Marie al Sepolcro,* c. 1285. (c.61r. *Corale* 46-2) Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted from Ada Labriola, "La miniatura senese degli anni 1270-1330." In *La miniatura senese 1270-1420*, ed. Cristina de Benedictis, 11-103 (Milano: Soprintendenza al Patrimonio Storico Artistico e Demoetnoantropologico delle Province di Siena e Grosseto, 2002), 81.

Figure 5-10. Primo Maestro, Initial A, *Cristo Benedicente e gli Apostoli*, (c.3v, *Corale* 33-C). Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 5-11. Primo Maestro, Initial C, *Strage degli Innocenti*, (c.168r, *Corale* 33-C). Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 5-12. Primo Maestro, Initial H, *Battesimo di Cristo,* (c.3v, *Corale* 34-D). Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted by permission.

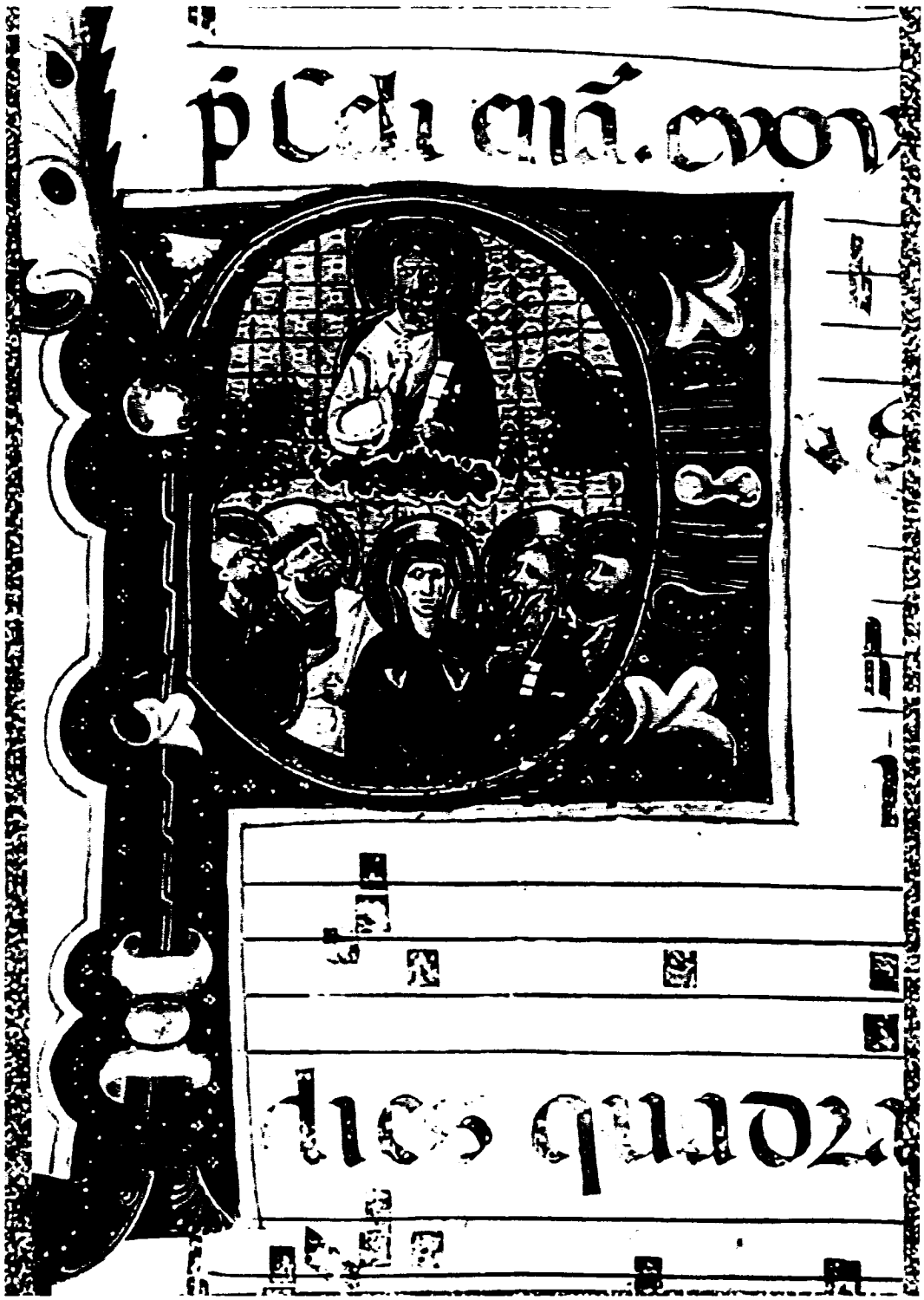

Figure 5-13. Primo Maestro, Initial P, *Ascensione di Cristo*, c. 1285 (c.3r, *Corale* 36-F). Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted by permission.

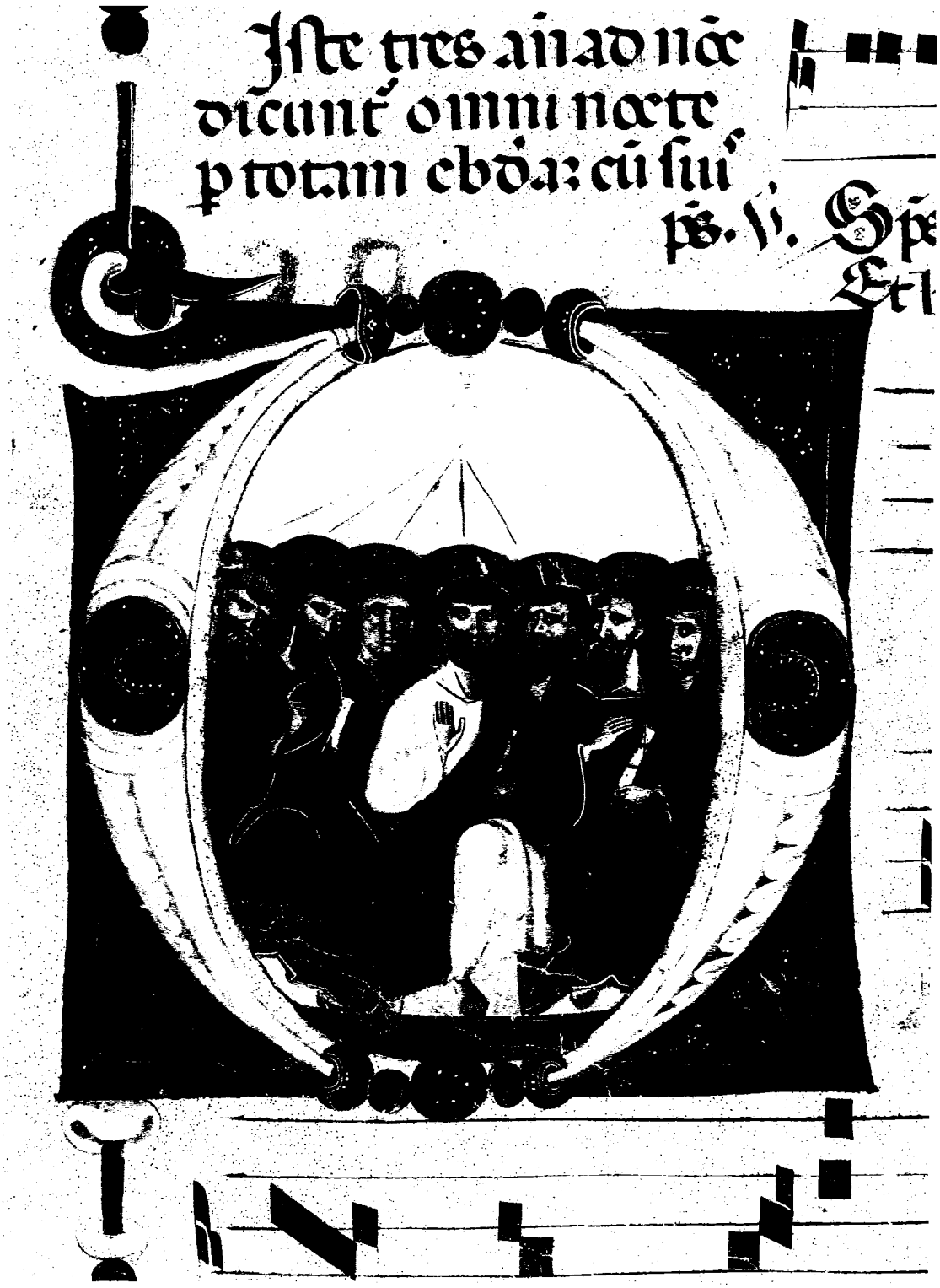

Figure 5-14. Primo Maestro, Initial D, *Pentecoste,* c. 1285 (c.20r, *Corale* 36-F). Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 5-15. Primo Maestro, Initial S, *Vocazione di Pietro e Andrea*, c. 1285 (c.139r, *Corale* 36-F). Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted by permission.

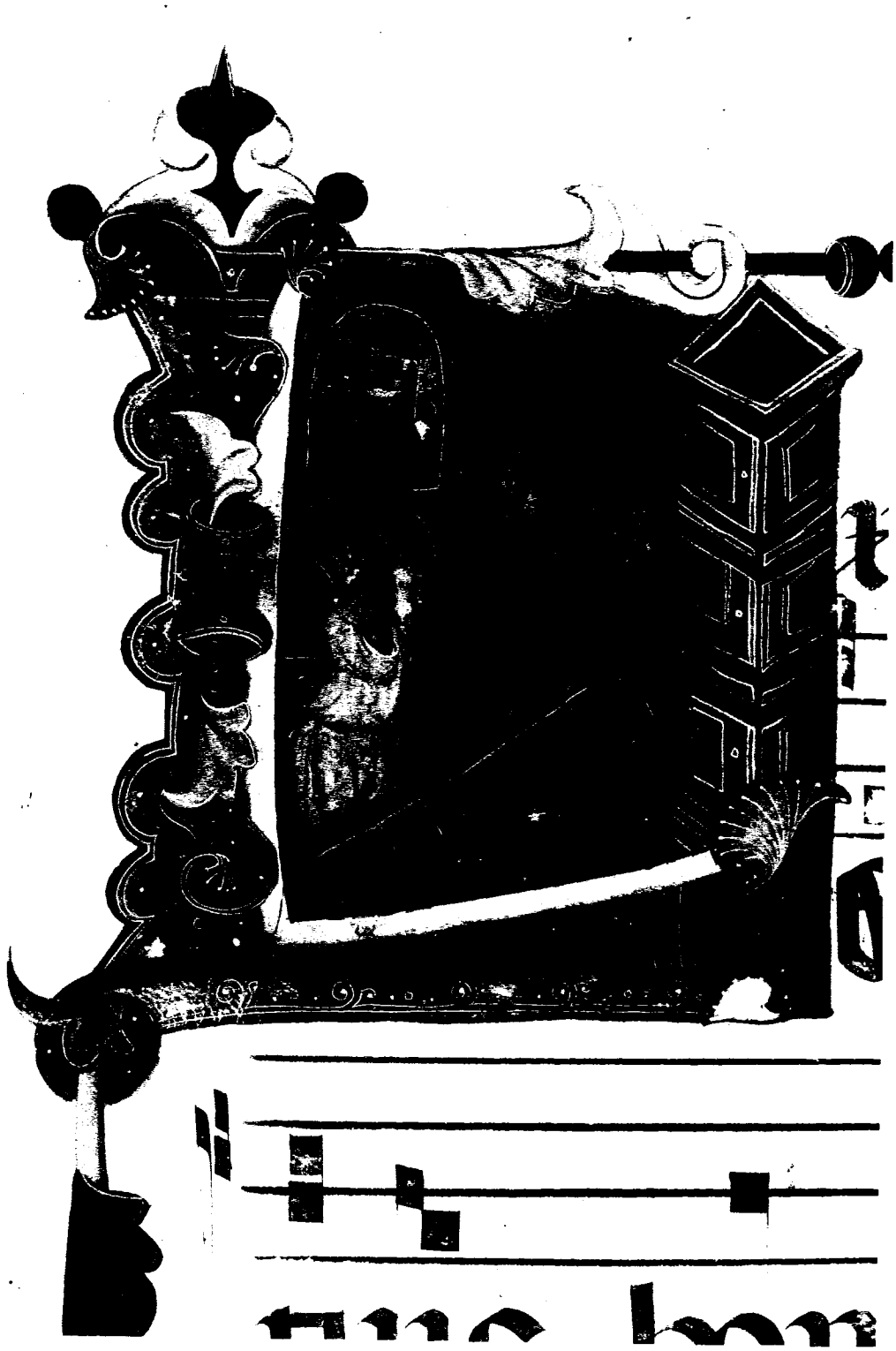

Figure 5-16. Primo Maestro, Initial L, *Martirio di San Lorenzo,* c. 1285 (c.202v, *Corale* 36-F). Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 5-17. Primo Maestro, Initial S, *Presentazione al Tempio* (c.14v, Ms. G.I.2, *Lezionario*). Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati.

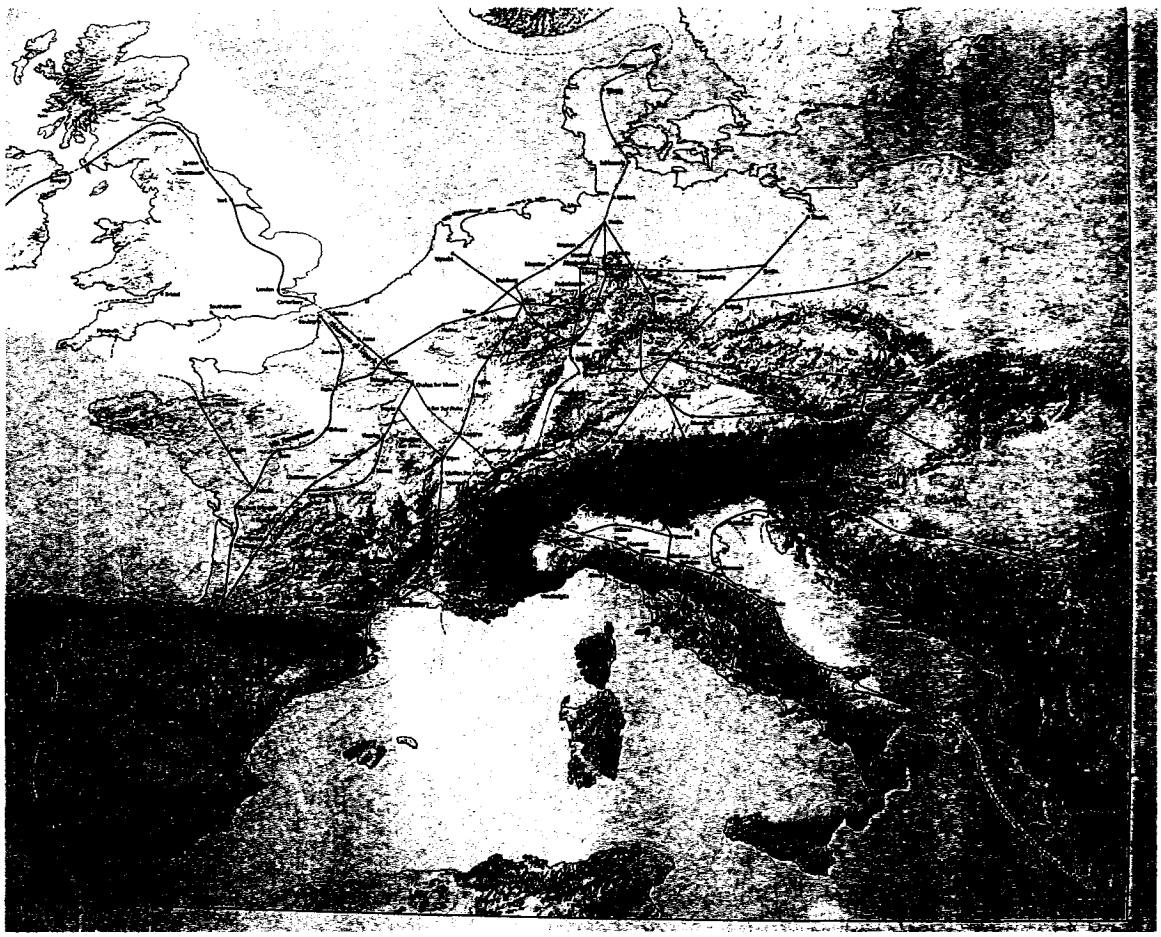

Figure 6-1. Map of pilgrimage routes throughout Europe. Siena, wall text in Ospedale Santa Maria della Scala. Photo by author.

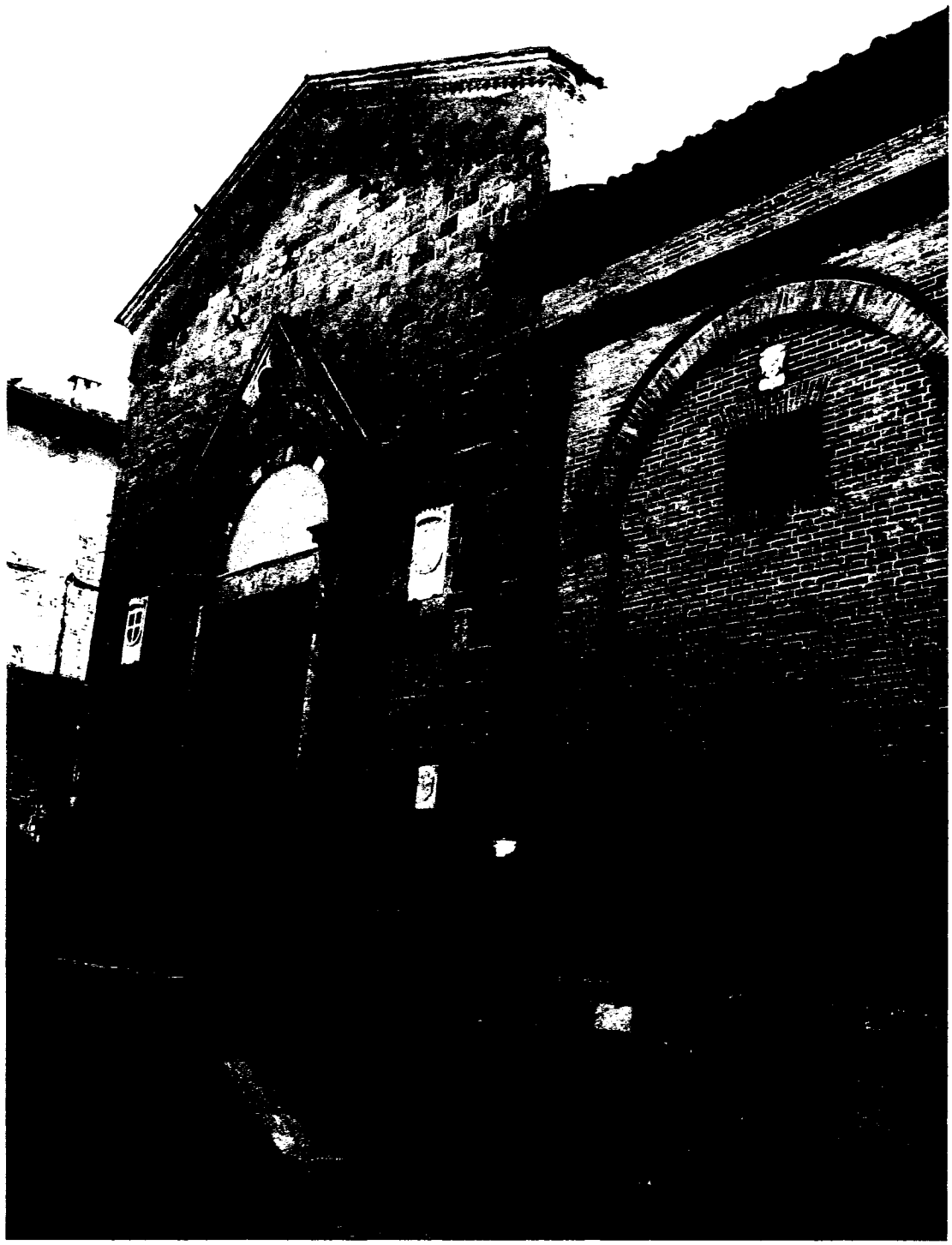

Figure 6-2. Chiesa San Pietro alla Magione, c. 1200. Siena, Via Montanini. Photo by author.

Figure 6-3. Detail of Chiesa San Pietro alla Magione. Photo by author.

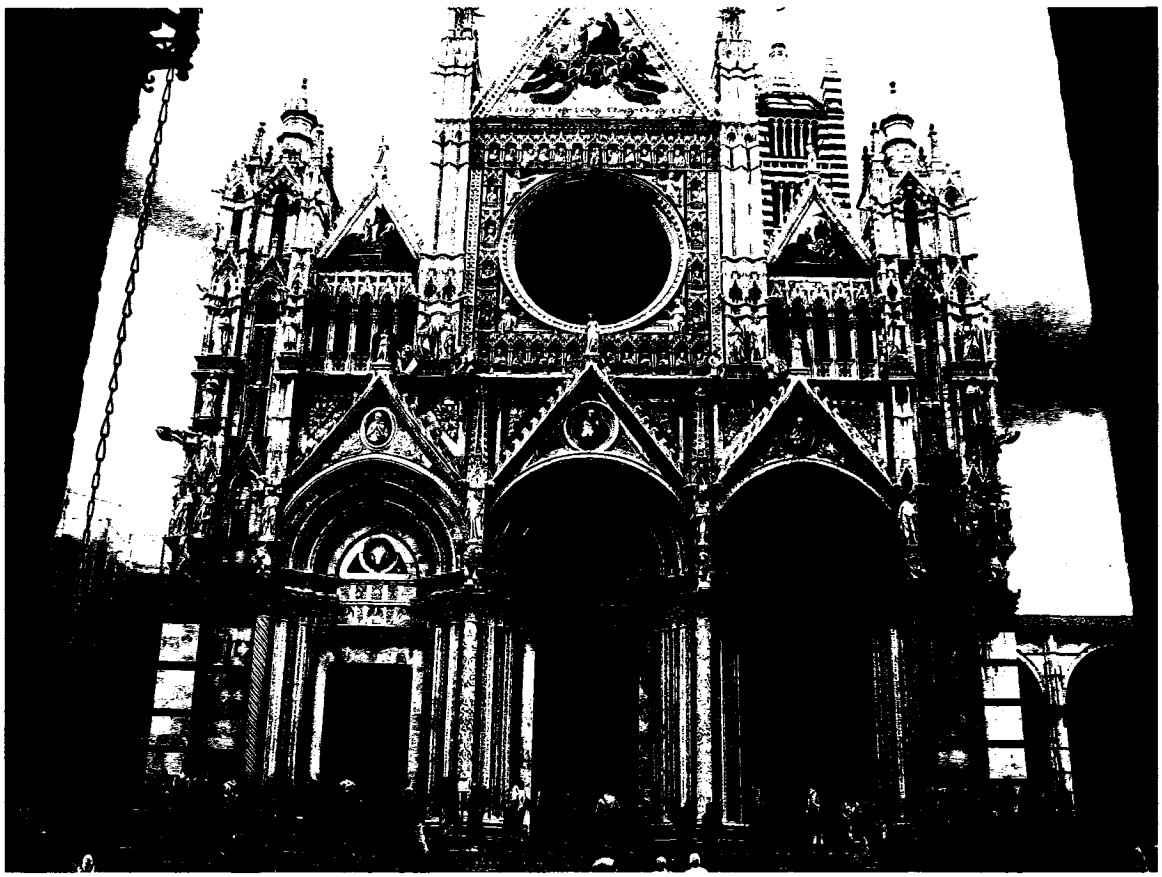

Figure 6-4. The Duomo of Siena. Photo by author.

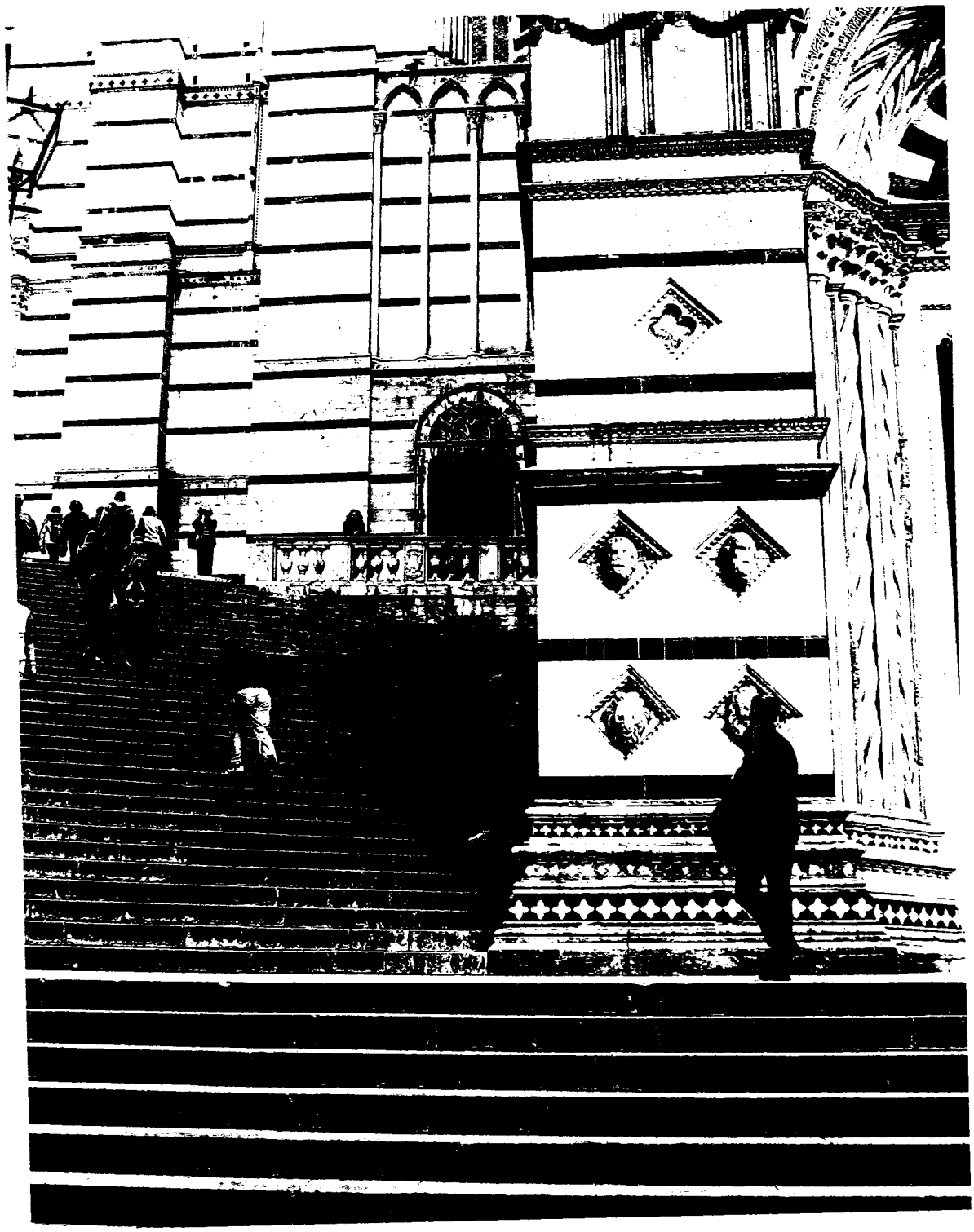

Figure 6-5. Entrance to Crypt of the Siena Duomo. Photo by author.

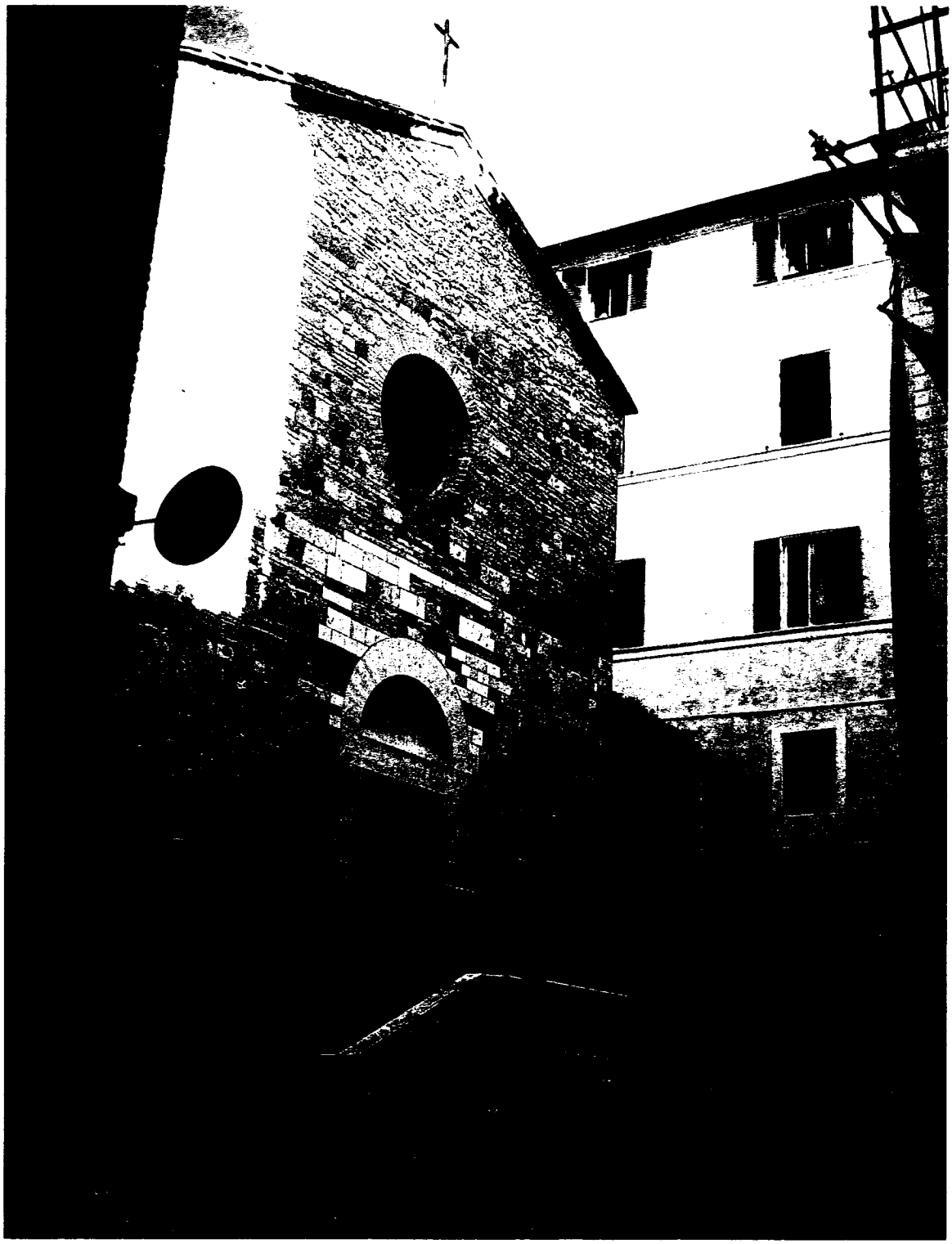

Figure 6-6. Chiesa Sant'Andrea. Siena, Via Montanini. Originally Romanesque, altered in 1760. Photo by author.

Figure 6-7. Plaque on door of the Chiesa di S. Pellegrino alla Sapienza, Siena. Photo by author.

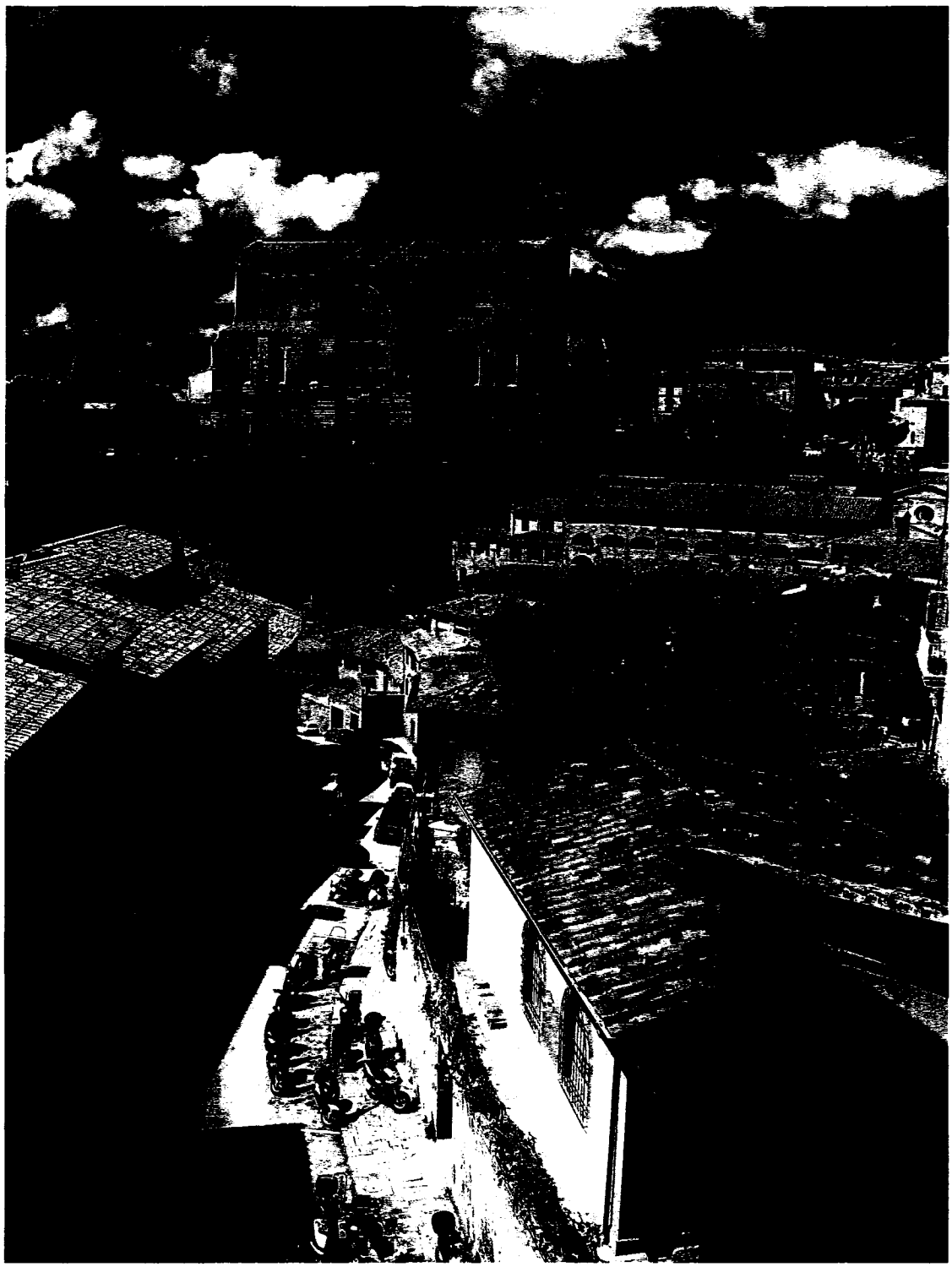

Figure 6-8. Basilica San Domenico, Siena. Photo by author.

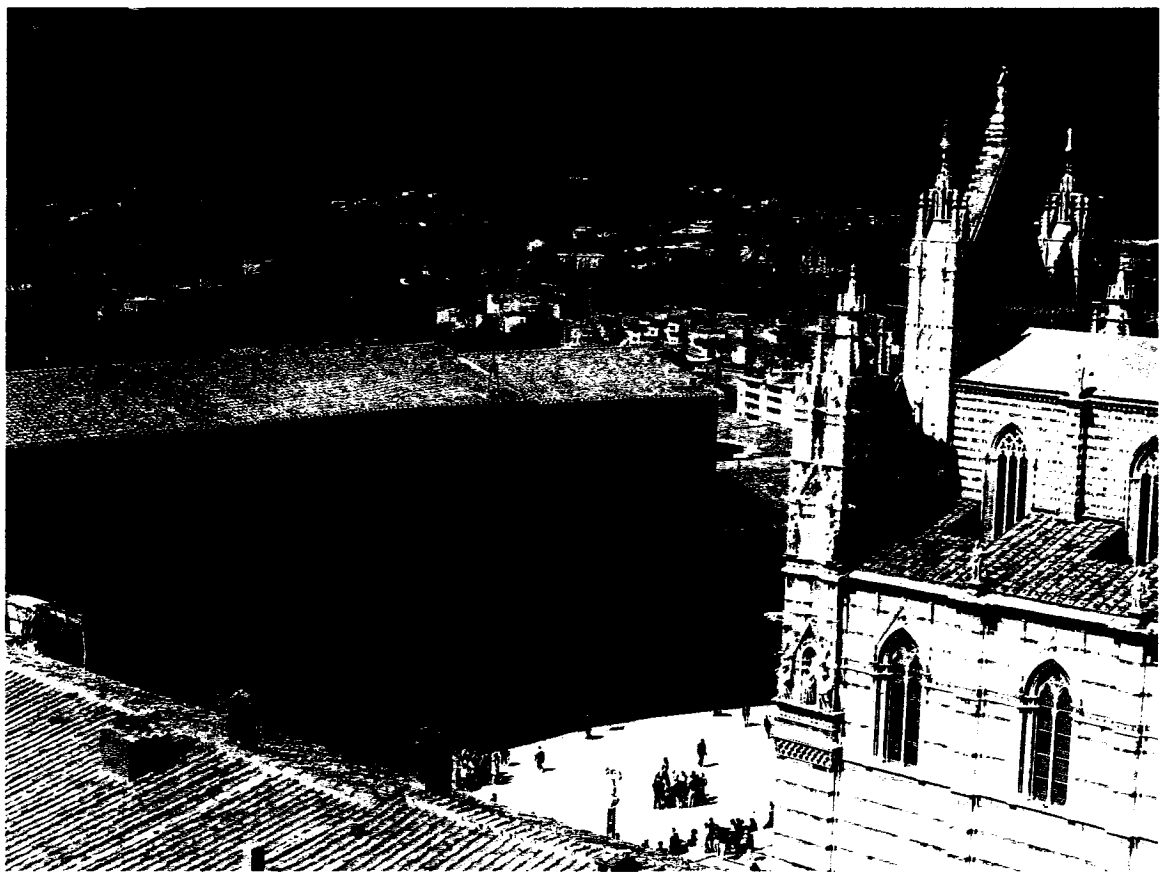

Figure 6-9. Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, on the Piazza del Duomo, Siena. Photo by author.

Figure 6-10. Vicolo San Girolamo, alley beside Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, Siena. Photo by author.

Figure 6-11. Interior staircase in the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, Siena, leading down to underground rooms (with Thebaid frescoes by Lorenzetti School). Photo by author.

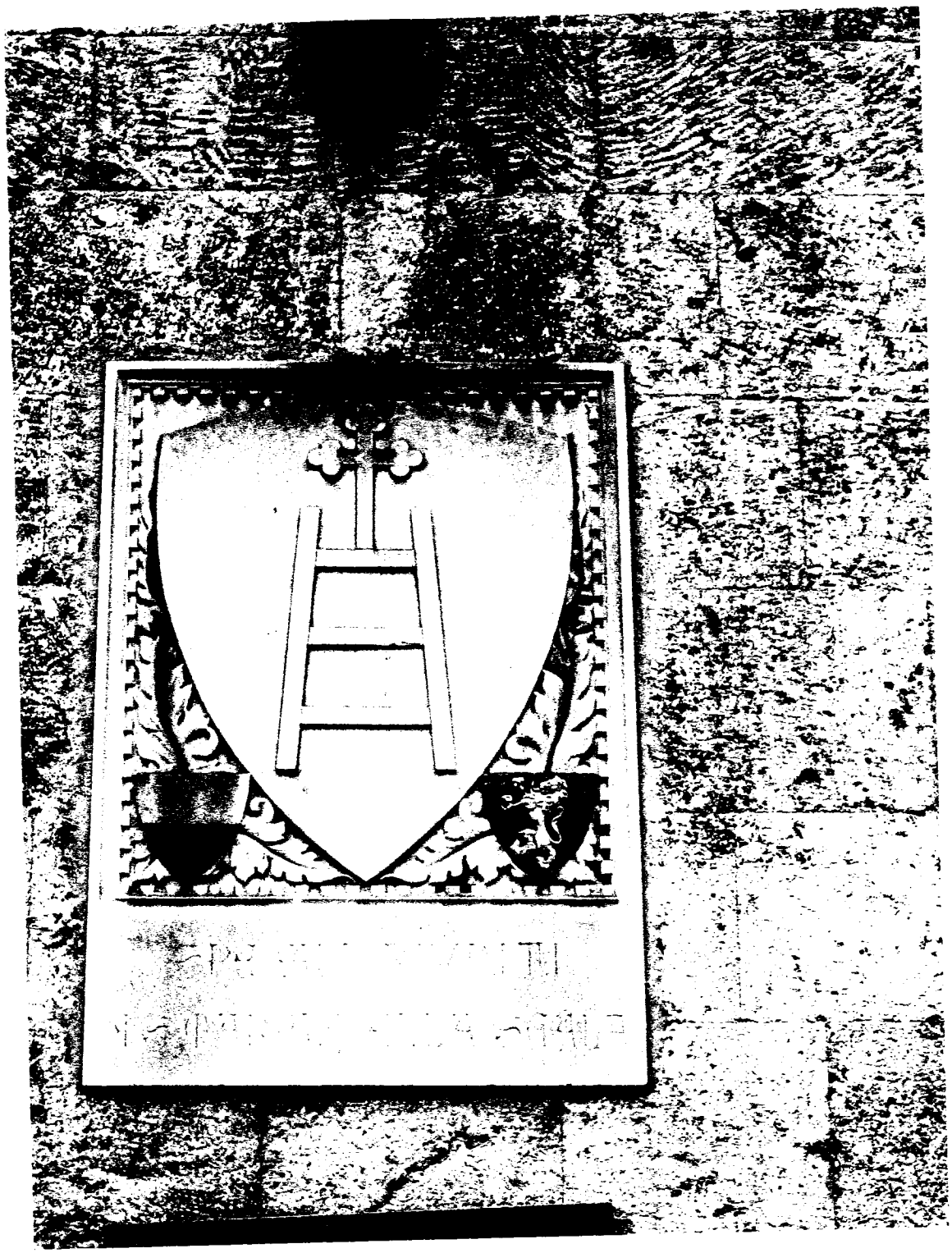

Figure 6-12. Plaque of the ladder emblem outside the main entrance to the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala. Siena, Piazza del Duomo. Photo by author.

Figure 6-13. The Cuna farmstead (*granja*) and village that historically served the needs of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala. 14th century. Photo by author.

Figure 6-14. The Cuna building still bears the emblem of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala. Photo by author.

Figure 6-15. The exterior nave wall of the Ospedale church, Santissima Annunziata, Siena, Piazza del Duomo. Photo by author.

Figure 7-1. Guido da Graziano, *San Pietro in trono*, 1280. Siena, Pinacoteca. Reprinted from Marco Torriti, *National Picture Gallery of Siena* (Genova: Sagep Editrice, 2003), 6.

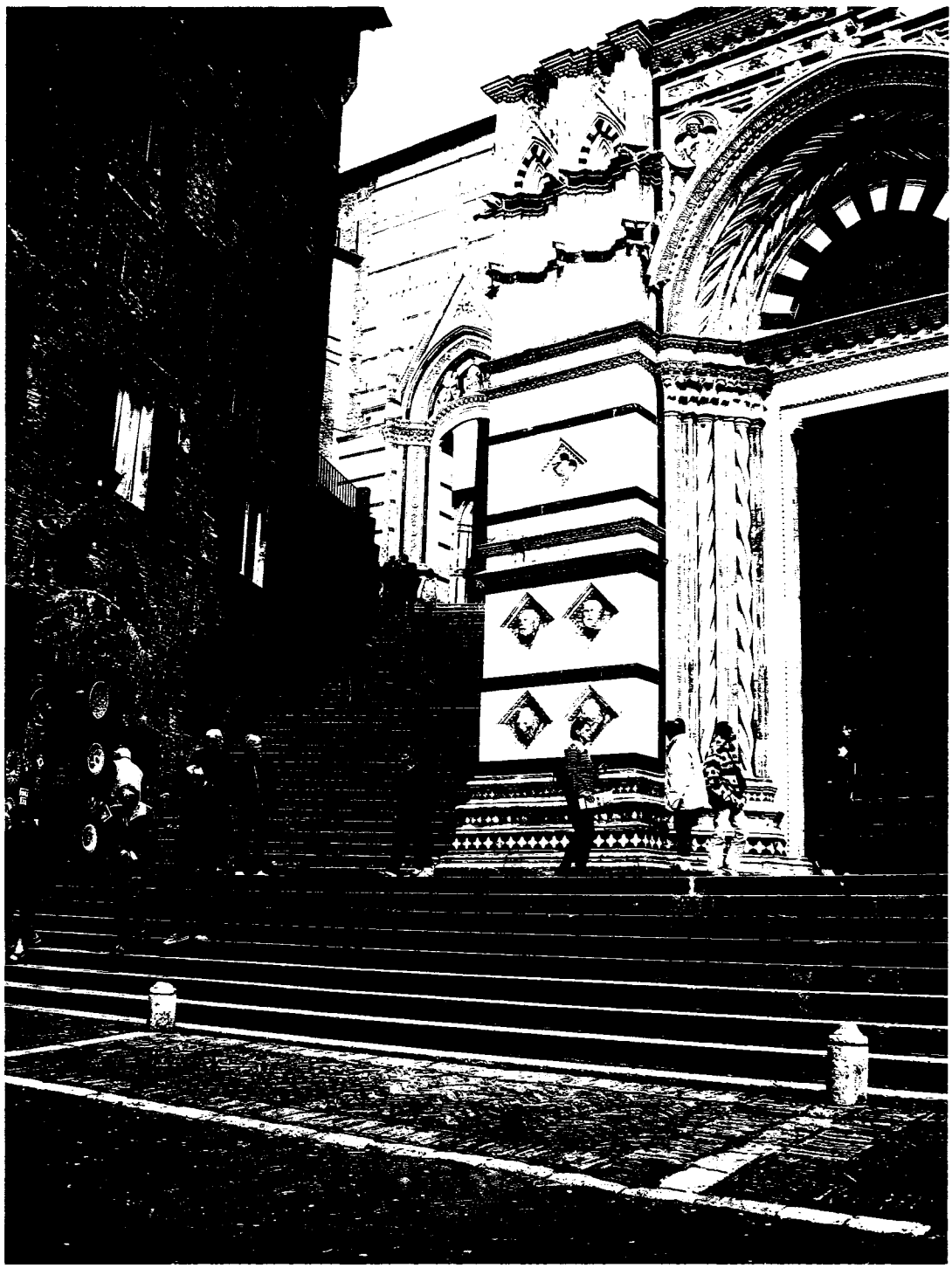

Figure 7-2. Stairs beside the Siena Duomo, leading from the Piazza San Giovanni below to the Piazza del Duomo above. Photo by author.

Figure 7-3. Red cross symbol on wall of Basilica San Domenico, Siena. Photo by author.

Figure 7-4. Cerchia degli Orcagna (or Boniauti). *San Pietro Martire consegna gli stendardi ai capitani del Bigallo*, c. 1340. Florence, Museo del Bigallo. Photo by author.

Figure 7-5. Escutcheon of the Arciconfraternita di Misericordia. Siena, Via Porrione. Photo by author.

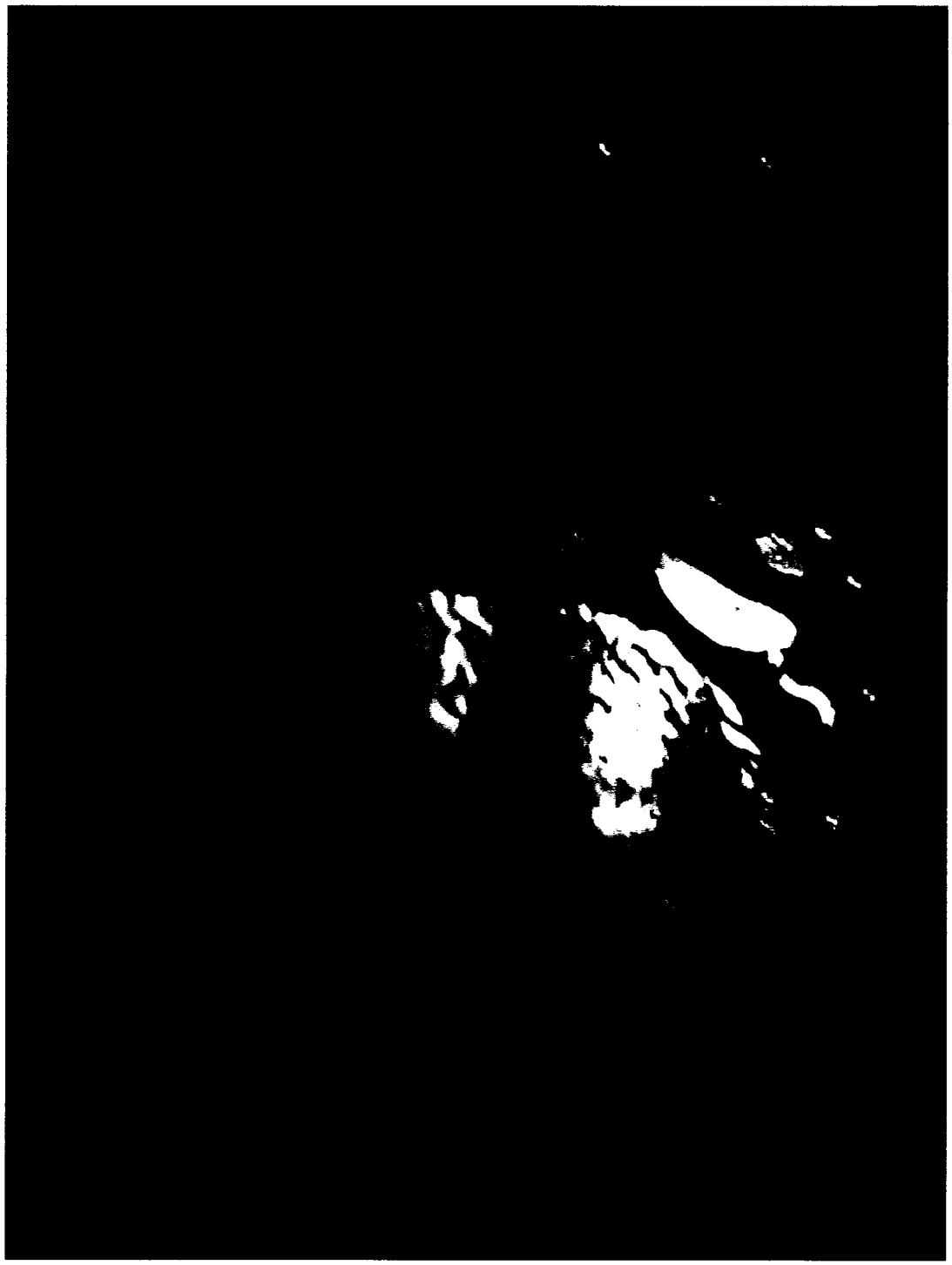

Figure 7-6. Stained glass window. Florence, Duomo. Photo by author.

Figure 7-7. Cerchia di Andrea di Bartolo, *Biccherna* cover, 1420s. Siena, Archivio di Stato. Reprinted from Gabriella Piccinni and Carla Zarrilli, eds., *Arte e assistenza a Siena* (Siena, Comune di Siena, 2003), 101.

Figure 7-8. Palazzo del Rettore, c. 1290. Siena, Piazza del Duomo. Photo by author.

APPENDIX A

CHRISTIE'S CATALOG ENTRY DESCRIBING THE BURKE ILLUMINATION

Valuable Illuminated Manuscripts, Printed Books and Autograph Letters. Christie's, London, 1999

Property from the Estate of Elizabeth Hirsch

VIRGIN AND CHILD with confraternity members, in an initial S on a leaf from a Gradual, Illuminated Manuscript on Vellum (Siena, late 13th century)

428 x 296mm (leaf); 110 x 98mm (initial). Half-length Virgin and Child making gestures of blessing, above a procession of five confraternity members at the foot of a flight of stairs, two of the men holding candles, the first with the banner of the confraternity, all against a background tessellated in shades of orange and blue, the initial staves of grey modeled in brown and white and punctuated with bosses of burnished gold, a border the height of the left margin including the torso of a wild man, a medallion-like pattern of foliate decoration in the lower margin. The leaf with five 4-line musical staves in red ink with square neumes and five lines of text in round Italian liturgical gothic script in brown ink; on the verso the original folio number 'xxv' in the upper margin (the script and neumes erased on the recto, a few tiny unobtrusive holes; the miniature and border in fine condition except for minor flaking of burnished gold). In a double-sided frame.

The text Spiritus domini replevit orbem terrarum is that of the Introit for the Mass of Pentecost.

This imposing initial is by one of the illuminators who worked on the choirbooks for Siena Cathedral at the end of the 13th century: *Il Gotico a Siena*, 1982, pp. 51-52, 54, 68, 160-162. Three other detached folios with historiated initials painted by this illuminator, and closely comparable to the present initial, are now in Venice in the Fondazione Cini; a further initial with the Resurrection, probably from the same manuscript as the Cini leaves, belonged to H.P. Kraus when it was shown in the 1997 exhibition in Milan. In the catalogue of the exhibition the identification of the illuminator as Dietisalvi di Speme, an artist documented in Siena from 1259-1291, was proposed: A. Labriola, *Miniature a Brera 1100-1422*, ed. Boskovits, Valagussa and Bollati (Milan 1997), pp. 90-91, cat. No. 13. These folios, however, are not from the same manuscript as the present leaf, which seems likely to have come from a choirbook made for, or commissioned by, a confraternity under the patronage of the Virgin. One candidate for consideration would be the Confraternita della Misericordia founded in Siena in 1250 by Beato Andrea Gallerani. Their premises still stand on via del Porrione.

APPENDIX B

LISTING OF KNOWN WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO PRIMO MAESTRO DEI CORALI DEL DUOMO DI SIENA

(Derived from Labriola, Ada. "La miniatura senese degli anni 1270-1330." In *La miniatura senese 1270-1420*, ed. Cristina de Benedictis, 11-103. Milano: Soprintendenza al Patrimonio Storico Artistico e Demoetnoantropologico delle Province di Siena e Grosseto, 2002.)

Arezzo, Pieve di Santa Maria
(now in Archivio Capitolare del Duomo)
Corale D, *Graduale de Sanctis dall' vigilia di S. Andrea apostolo alla festa di San Clemente papa*
6 historiated initials
46 decorated initials

S, Presentation of Jesus in the Temple
G, Martyrdom of St. Agatha
D, St. John the Baptist
I, Ss. Peter and Paul
D, St. Lawrence
G, Dormition of the Virgin

Austria, Private Collection
Clipped out Initial E, Christ blessing between two angels and the Apostles

Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
Ms. Vat. Rossiano 612, *Graduale de Sanctis dalla vigilia di S. Andrea Apostolo alla festa di S. Clemente papa*
3 historiated initials
C, Martyrdom of S. Lorenzo
G, Assumption of the Virgin
S, Nativity of the Virgin

Philadelphia Free Library
M 69.6 Cut out foglio from a *Graduale.*
A (historiated initial), Madonna and Child and two worshippers

M69.7 Cut out foglio from a *Graduale.* (438x310mm) (probable source of Bob's Resurrection; possibly same source as his Madonna and Child and Worshippers)
D (historiated initial), Adoration of the Magi

San Francisco, Robert Burke Collection

Clipped initial from a *Graduale*
R, Resurrection of Christ and 3 Marys at the Sepulchre

Cut out foglio from a *Graduale* (428 x 296mm)
S, Madonna and Child and Procession of Worshippers

Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati

Ms. G. I.2, *Lezionario*
44 historiated initials, 135 decorated initials

R, San Saturnino e San Sisinnio diaconno
N, San Nicola
I, Sant Ambrogio
C, Santa Lucia
T, San Tommaso Apostolo
F, San Fabiano e San Sebastiano
S, Sant'Agnese
S, San Paolo
S, Presentazione al Tempi
B, Sant' Agata
P, San Pietro in Cattedra
M, San Mattia Apostolo
G, San Gregorio Papa
F, San Benedetto
V, Annunciazione
I, San Jacopo Apostolo
I, San Giovanni Apostolo
I, San Michele Arcangelo
B, San Barnaba Apostolo
P, San Giovanni Battista
P, San Pietro e Paolo
E, Santa Maria Maddalena,
A, San Jacopo Apostolo
B, San Domenico
C, Madonna con il bambino
S, San sisto Papa
P, San Lorenzo
B, San Bartolomeo
I, Sant'Agostino
H, Decollazione del Battista
O, Madonna con il Bambino
I, San Michele Arcangelo
B, San Francesco
M, San Marco

L, San Luca
S, Santi Simone e Giuda
L, Cristo Benedicente e Tutti I Santi
B, Sant'Elisabetta d'Ungheria
C, Santa Cecilia
C, San Clemente
R, Santa Caterina d'Alessandria
B, Sant'Elisabetta d'Ungheria
I, Santa
C, Consecrazione di una Chiesa

Ms. G. III. 2, Sequentiae Missarum
6 historiated initials, 2 decorated initials
L, Madonna con il Bambino
C, Stimmate di San Francesco
I, San Domenico
C, San Nicolà
R, San Clemente
C, I Santi Pietro e Paolo

Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo

Corale 33-C. Antifonario Notturno de Tempore dal Primo Sabato d'Avvento all'ottava della Natività di Cristo
2 historiated initials, decorated initials
A, Cristo Benedicente e gli Apostoli
C, Strage degli Innocenti

Corale 34-D. Antifonario Notturno de Tempore dalla vigilia dell Epifania alla seconda domenica di Quadragesima.
2 historiated initials
H, Battesimo di Cristo
D, Cristo in Maesta

Corale 36-F. Antifonario Notturno de Tempore dalla vigilia dell'Ascensione di Cristo alla XIV domenica dopo Pentecoste
8 historiated initials, 236 decorated and filigreed initials
P, Ascensione di Cristo
D, Pentecoste
F, San Giovanni Evangelista
S, Vocazione di Pietro e Andrea
Q, San Paolo
M, Santo eremita e Maria Maddalena

L, Martirio di San Lorenzo
D, Dormitio Virginis

Corale 46-2. Graduale de Tempore dalla domenica delle Palme all domenica XXIV dopo Pentecoste

6 historiated initials, 267 decorated initials

R, Resurrezione di Cristo e let marie al Sepolcro

Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini

Clipped out initial A, from a Graduale, Giudizio Finale

Clipped out initial V, from a Graduale, Ascensione di Cristo

Cut page of a Graduale, L, Natività di Cristo

Cutout page, from a Graduale, A, San Giovanni Battista

APPENDIX C

PERMISSIONS FOR REPRODUCTIONS

From : Pollock, Janine <PollockJ@library.phila.gov>

Sent : Tuesday, March 28, 2006 6:01 AM

To : "Elaine French" <french_elaine@hotmail.com>

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Sieno, 25 Settembre 2006

Prot. n. 1117, III, 6

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35 Hidden Valley lane
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	c.168r, C, Strage degli Innocen
	Corale 34-D
	c.3v, H, Battesimo di Cristo
	Corale 36-F
	c.3r, P, - Ascensione di Cristo
	c.20r, D, Pentecoste
	c.139r, S, Vocazione di Pietro e Andre
	c.223v, D, Dormitio Virginis
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	c.61r, R, Resurrezione di Cristo

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From : Franco Novello <fototeca@cini.it>
Sent : Friday, November 17, 2006 5:15 AM
To : "Elaine French" <french_elaine@hotmail.com>
Subject : Re: Riproduzione miniature

Gentile dott.ssa French,
le immagini digitali delle miniature sono già state inviate e certamente le riceverà nei prossimi giorni.
Nel frattempo Le comunico che la Fondazione Giorgio Cini concede il permesso di riproduzione delle seguenti miniature senza il pagamento di alcun diritto:
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n. 2022 (Iniziale ritagliata V, con la rappresentazione dell'Ascensione di Cristo)
n. 2023 (Iniziale L, con la rappresentatazione della Natività di Cristo)
n. 2156 (Iniziale A, con la rappresentazione di San Giovanni Battista)
Tali immagini, come concordato, dovranno essere riprodotte solo nella sua tesi di Master.
Con i migliori auguri per i suoi studi, Le porgo i più distinti saluti
dr. Franco Novello

----- Original Message ----- From: "Elaine French" <french_elaine@hotmail.com>
To: <fototeca@cini.it>
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2006 9:17 PM
Subject: Re: Riproduzione miniature

Gentile Dott. Novello,
Spero che Lei abbia ricevuto la mia e-mail comunicandole il mio indirizzo. Intanto attendo con ansia il CD delle immagini digitali delle miniature.
Se non l'ha ancora fatto, potrebbe gentilmente inviarmi tramite posta elettronica (la modalita` preferita) oppure per posta normale una lettera ufficiale accordandomi l'autorizzazione della Fondazione Cini di adoperare le immagini nella mia tesi di Master? Capira` che senza una tale lettera non potrei usare le immagini.
Distinti saluti,
Elaine French

----Original Message Follows----
From: "Franco Novello" <fototeca@cini.it>
To: "Elaine French" <french_elaine@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: Riproduzione miniature
Date: Tue, 24 Oct 2006 12:30:51 +0200

Gentile dott.ssa French,
nei prossimi giorni il nostro fotografo, Sig. Matteo De Fina, eseguirà le immagini digitali delle miniature da Lei richieste. Con le immagini digitali il fotografo le spedirà anche la fattura.
In quella stessa occasione le invierò l'autorizzazione ad adoperare le immagini per la sua tesi.
Con i più distinti saluti,
dr. Franco Novello
----- Original Message -----
From: Elaine French
To: fototeca@cini.it
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2006 5:53 PM
Subject: RE: Riproduzione miniature

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No. 2022 Iniziale ritagliata V, da un Graduale, Ascensione di Cristo.

No. 2023 Foglio staccato da un Graduale. Iniziale istoriata L, Nativita di

Cristo.

No. 2156 Foglio staccato da un Graduale, Iniziale istoriata A, San Giovanni Battista.

La ringrazio in anticipo, e le invio i miei distinti saluti,
Elaine French

From: "Franco Novello" <fototeca@cini.it>
To: <french_elaine@hotmail.com>
Subject: Riproduzione miniature
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May 30, 2006

Robert Burke
333 Infantry Terrace
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Sincerely,

Elaine French

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Date: May 30, 2006

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